**Revolution in Education**

Educatia nu e zidita pe iubire ci pe competitie .Competitia e invidie, frustrare, invidie, violenta

Invatam pe copii sa fie generosi , sa aiba simpatie dar in acelasi timp vrem sa fie competitivi

O minte competitiva e mereu dura, violenta . Fiecare e cu mana in gatul celuilat sau cu mana in buzunarul lui .Invatam copiii lacomia si frica in acelasi timp .Le otravim mintile

Educatia se bazeaza pe ambitie care la baza e violenta. toti vor sa fie cineva, la toti le e frica sa fie un nimeni. Toti vor pozitie sociala, un nume o reputatie. Cine creaza aceasta nebunie? Educatia

Belief and trust bind you, whereas doubt liberates.

Politicienii nu vor ca tu sa gandesti. Daca gandesti castele nu mai pot fi, exploatarea monetara nu se mai poate face.

But where intelligence is not encouraged, one has to depend on the imposed discipline. Such

discipline is bound to be false because it is not arising from within one’s own self and because its

roots are not there in one’s own intelligence. The conscience of the individual is always smoldering

from within in opposition to imposed discipline. As a reaction to such a discipline, licentiousness is

born. Licentiousness is always a reaction to slavery. It is the unavoidable echo of slavery.

Consciousness full of freedom can never be licentious. If a man is to be saved from the disease of

licentiousness, his soul must receive the atmosphere of total freedom. However, we know only two

alternatives – either slavery or licentiousness. We have not yet become ready for freedom.

What have the methods of discipline achieved? Discipline has given stupidity and lifelessness to

man. A disciplined person is bound to be rigid. The more rigid he is, the more disciplined he will

be. You see how disciplined machines are! Intelligence cannot always say yes; it should also know

how to say no. In your yes there will be meaning and value only if you know when to say no. But

discipline never teaches saying no; it always expects to be told yes. If a disciplined man is asked

to shoot, he has to shoot. It is only because of such education that war, violence and all sorts of

stupidities have been going on in the world, and they still continue.

Do we not want to break this vicious circle? Will this teaching of discipline stop only after the

nuclear war? But after the nuclear war there will be no such necessity because there will neither

exist the discipline-giver nor the disciplined. For the future of humanity there is more danger from

the disciplined people than anybody else, because they know only how to obey commands. Those

obedient people are ready even to use nuclear weapons. This world would have been totally different

had intelligence been taught instead of discipline, had thinking been taught instead of obedience.

The day education will be rebellious a new, absolutely new humanity will be born.

What is the meaning of rebellion? It means a revolution of values. Certainly the values of life are

wrong; otherwise why should there be so much disturbance, meaninglessness and confusion in

the life of man? This ugliness, this violence, this jealousy and irreligiousness, are they all without

any reason? No, the values of life are wrong and these are its natural outcome. The values of life

will have to be changed. Man needs new values. And for that, preparation for a great rebellion is

necessary.

But the teacher is in great illusions. The society may well starve him by not paying him enough, but

the society shows great respect for him. The teacher has always been respected and honored. His

ego is nourished by being told that a teacher deserves respect and honor. That is how he is kept in

delusion. Thus he is being used to cast new generations into old molds. The teacher is exploited

by being treated with great respect. The society does not give respect to the teacher for nothing. In

exchange for the respect given, society cheaply takes very costly work from the teacher. I ask you,

are the teachers aware of this?

The history of man is full of stupidities. Blind beliefs and false knowledge have erected their camps

everywhere. But the teacher does not allow new generations to be free of these chains. He has

been the servant of the past and thus has proved to be an enemy of the future. Is it fair that the

burden of the past should be on our heads? Let the past be the ground under our feet, but it should

not become a burden on our heads. For building the future a mind free of the past is a necessity.

Let experiences of the past add to man’s knowledge, but not bind him, because he has to go far

beyond them. The past is the beginning of his journey, not the end. He has to proceed forward, from

where the past generation has left him. Every generation has to defeat the past generation in every

aspect – not only in the material aspect, but in the mental and religious aspects also. Certainly the

ego of the past generation is hurt because of this. And because of this ego the past generation does

not like to see any development and progress that surpasses it.

Perhaps the ego and jealousy of the individuals infects the whole generation. All the founders of

religions have claimed that there will be no other exponents of their religion. Every paigambara or

messiah has said that he is the ultimate. Each has proclaimed himself to be omniscient. In this way

they have closed all the doors for the development of knowledge in the future. The golden era is

always in the past; in the future there is a fall and degeneration.

It is very harmful to tie man to the pegs of the past. But the old generation always wants to impose

its scriptures and principles on the new generation. This has been happening for hundreds of years.

As a result, the soul of man could not develop as much as it might have. It did not acquire the

maturity which it could have acquired. It is buried under the rocks of the past, and the burden is so

heavy that it cannot climb higher.

The purpose of education is to unburden the soul of man, because only weightless souls can rise to

the peaks of godliness. The burden of dead conditionings does not allow the seed of consciousness

to sprout, and the seed gets destroyed slowly, buried as it is in the ground. It is not possible for the

seed of one’s individuality to sprout without being unburdened from the past. If the grip of the past

is loose, only then man can make progress. The past is a ladder which has to be climbed and left

behind. Carrying it on your head is not wise.

In this world material wealth is increasing, because every new generation takes it to more distant

horizons than the past generation, but spiritual wealth is not increasing because our minds are very

shackled to the past. The son does not hesitate to build a new house where his father had made

one. But some deep fear prevents us from developing the inheritance that is left behind by Rama,

Krishna, Buddha, Mahavira or Christ. This fear is a taught one, this fear is an imposed one.

I am unable to understand this madness. My love tells me only this, that all those who are born in

the world after me should surpass me in every way; that they should build such a new world that we

could not have even imagined; that their souls should be brighter and their thinking purer; that their

eyes may encounter those truths which we could not, and their feet travel on unknown paths which

were not known to us even in our dreams. Love can wish and pray for only this. I would not like to

bind my children by my knowledge or by my experiences; I would like to make them free.

Love always frees. Love that binds is not love, but violence.

Education teaches fear. Education teaches greed. Education teaches jealousy and competition.

Education initiates the fever of ambition.

When I look, I find that there is no more dreadful a disease than fear. What else is there in life to

be feared more than fear itself? Fear paralyses the very being of a person. Fear destroys the whole

capacity for rebellion. Fear makes any change impossible. Fear binds one to the known, and the

journey to the unknown is completely stopped, although whatever is worth knowing and achieving

in life is all unknown.

God is unknown. Truth is unknown. Beauty is unknown. Love is unknown. But the fearful mind

always clings to the known. It does not go beyond the drawn line. It treads upon the beaten track. It

never leaves the laid-out tracks. The fearful person becomes mechanical and he is no better than a

drudge. Religions teach fear – fear of hell, fear of sins and fear of punishment. Society teaches fear

– fear of dishonor. Education teaches fear – fear of failure.

Simultaneously there is greed attached – greed for heaven, greed for fruits of virtue; greed for

respect, position, reputation, success and rewards. All greed is the other side of the coin of fear.

In the present system the consciousness of a person becomes full of fear and greed. The fire of

jealousy and competition is aroused. The fever of ambition is created. It is no wonder if, in all these

circular motions, life is wasted.

Comparison of one with the other is a fundamental mistake. Comparison creates competition.

Neither anyone is ahead nor anyone is behind; nobody is below and nobody is above. Everyone is

that which he is, and everyone has to be that. The teaching of ideals does not allow this. Children

are told to be like Rama, to be like Buddha, to be like Gandhi. What can be more erroneous than

this? Can anybody become like somebody else, or has anybody ever been able to become like

somebody else? It is not possible to become Rama. Yes, one can become the Rama of the drama

of Ramaleela....

That is why there is so much hypocrisy in the world. Hypocrisy is the shadow of ideals. As long

as ideals are imposed, there will be hypocrisy. If hypocrisy is to be uprooted, ideals will have to be

dropped. In fact, no man is born to be like anyone else. Everybody has to be just himself. Everyone

has to let that seed which is hidden within him grow into a tree.

When education accepts the truth of everybody’s unique and unparalleled individuality, that will be

the beginning of a great revolution. Then we will not impose any structure on anybody else, but we

will help what is dormant in their seed to manifest. Because of ideals a lot of violence has been

taking place and we did not allow an opportunity to a person to be what he can be. In an attempt to

be someone else, not only does a person not become that other person, he is not able to be what

he could have been.

I very humbly would like to request you to let everyone be what he is born to be. A rose is a rose

and a jasmine is a jasmine. Neither anyone is higher nor anyone is lower. The rose cannot be a

jasmine and the jasmine cannot be a rose. This valuation of big and small, higher and lower, is false

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**CHAPTER 2. TOWARDS THE BIRTH OF A NEW MAN**

and absurd. Destroy these valuations. A poet is not greater than a cobbler, and the politician is also

not higher than anyone. A teacher does not become higher by becoming a president.

Life is a cooperation and in it everyone has a place and everyone is necessary and unavoidable.

Don’t you see the insanity of ambitiousness the whole world has fallen into because of attaching

reputation to position and to functions? It is sheer foolishness that a rose be taught to become a

jasmine, and a grass leaf be provoked to become a lotus. What is meaningful is that the roseflower

blooms to its fullness and the grass leaf blooms to its fullness, that their petals may not remain

undeveloped and their fragrance may not remain unreleased.

There is no other bliss in life except that one blooms to one’s full potential. That is the right direction

for the work of education.

Neither is there any need to teach ideals, nor is there any need to teach people to follow anyone.

All efforts should be centered towards one aim: that people can realize the fulfillment of their

individuality. Then only will it be possible to be free of ambition and the fever of jealousy. Then

only will a society be created which can achieve equality and peace. Only a society which is free

from ambition can be classless and without exploitation.

Can there be no such education, which is not based on ambition? Is mathematics and music learned

for the purpose of leaving other classmates behind? Is it not possible to learn mathematics for the

love of mathematics, and music for the love of music? As I see it, music can be learned and its

depth experienced only if there is love for music, not by being a competitor to anyone else.

Would a competitive mind know music? Competition itself is a disharmony. Music is known by those

who have sunk deep into music, not by those who have run in competition. There is an opposition

between running and diving deep. Running is full of tension, sinking deep is relaxation. Running is

feverish; it takes you out of yourself. To dive deep is healthy, because by diving deep within, one

settles in the ultimate depths of his own self. Learning is the art of diving deep. What teaches you

only how to run, I call that wrong learning.

Once I went to a meeting of teachers. It was a Teachers’ Day celebration. There I asked them, ”What

is there to respect in a teacher’s becoming a president? Is the teacher lower and the president

higher? If it is so, then there is no dignity of education or the teacher; the dignity is given to the

politician and politics. Yes, if a president gives up his position and becomes a teacher it can be a

matter of dignity for the teacher.”

As long as we keep the politician higher, we are teaching politics to children. The politicians always

say that the students and teachers should keep out of politics. But the higher status of politicians

arouses expectations in others. No wonder the teachers dream of being minister of education or

vice-president or president, and if they are running about to fulfill their dreams it is natural. Then

there is nothing wrong if other teachers are busy in trying to secure honors for the whole teaching

community.

The ambitious mind is a violent mind. Lessons of nonviolence are given, and at the same time,

ambition is also taught. What greater stupidity can there be?

Nonviolence is love. Ambition is competition. Love always feels like remaining behind. Competition

always wants to be ahead of all. Christ has said, ”Blessed are those who are capable of being the

last.” I would like those whom I love to stand ahead of me, and if I love all, I shall enjoy standing last

in the queue. But competition is just the reverse of love. It is jealousy, hatred and violence. It always

wants to stand ahead of all, in every way.

This race of keeping ahead begins in educational institutions and ends in the grave. The same race

is there in individuals. The same race is there in nations. Wars are the final result of this very race.

Why does this race exist? What is it rooted in? Its root is in the ego. The ego is taught and the ego

is nourished.

When love replaces ambition, truth is established in the place of success automatically. Where

success is the only value of life, there cannot be truth. The central importance given to success has

really killed truth. No, being successful is not all there is to life. Mere success is not a value in itself.

It is more valuable and dignified to be unsuccessful in a good project than to be successful in doing

a wrong thing. It is better to be unsuccessful in love than to be successful in competition. Is it not

more valuable to be unsuccessful in religiousness than to be successful in amassing wealth?

I do not see the value of life only in being successful. I see the value of life in truth, in goodness,

in beauty. But as long as success is the only measure, the soul of man cannot move towards truth,

goodness and beauty. For truth, goodness and beauty to prevail, even failure will have to have its

place in life. One should be able to see that in that direction even failure has dignity. It is a victory

even to be defeated for truth, because in your courage to accept even defeat for the sake of truth,

your soul is strengthened and it is able to touch those high peaks which are shining bright with the

light of God.

But all this is possible only if there is a revolution in the system of education and the values given to

victory and defeat, which have for centuries troubled man, are taken away.

The greatest offense that is committed towards the truth, happens when we insist upon imposing

traditional thinking on the children. This insistence is very dangerous. Belief or disbelief, in respect

to the soul and God, are imposed on children. The Gita, the Koran, Krishna and Mahavira are

imposed on children. Because of this, the quest for knowing the truth never arises in them. They are

unable to develop and have their own questions. The question of finding their own solutions does

not even arise. They go on repeating the readymade solutions their whole life. Their condition is like

parrots. Repetition is not reflection, repetition is mechanical. Truth cannot be received from others,

it has to be searched for and attained by everyone for himself.

Is it not fair that inquisitiveness in children be encouraged, that they should not be shackled with

readymade solutions? They should be helped in developing their own questions; borrowed answers

should not be dumped on them. If education can only send them out on the great journey of

discovering the truth of life, its work is over.

In my view, the teacher is one who arouses the dormant questioning in children, awakens

inquisitiveness and makes children fearless and courageous enough to find solutions for themselves.

One can be a teacher in this sense only if he himself is free from prejudices and biases.

That is why becoming a teacher needs endeavor full of devotion. A soul with awareness,

rebelliousness and alertness is required for becoming a teacher. A teacher in whom the fire of

rebellion is missing will become, knowingly or unknowingly, a broker for some vested interest –

some morality, some religion or some politics. Such a teacher will impose his beliefs and biases, of

which he himself is a prisoner, on the children.

If a teacher is free, then only can he be a messenger of freedom to his students. That is why I said

that to be a teacher is a great endeavor full of devotion. It is a great rebellion. Within the teacher

there should be a burning flame of thinking, contemplation and rebellion. He has to destroy many

things so that he can create. He has to obliterate many things to enable himself to do something

new. He has to put fire to the heaps of rubbish accumulated over many generations, and he has to

cut the useless weeds and grass that have grown and clear the ground of mind so that the flowers

of love and beauty can be grown there.

Students are increasing, universities are increasing, but the world is becoming worse and worse.

Universities are increasing and books are increasing. I am told there are five thousand books

published every week in the world. Books and students go on increasing in quantity, education is

increasing, but the world is becoming worse. In this world if wars are becoming more violent, hatred

is becoming more widespread, jealousy and envy are on the increase, there must be something

basically wrong. For this situation the responsibility really rests on those who are connected with

education – the teacher and the students.

During the last five thousand years there have been many revolutions – economic and political –

but so far there has been no fundamental revolution in education. It is worth deliberating on now

whether there is any possibility of a revolution in man’s culture without any revolution in education.

It is not possible, because education creates a structure of your mind from which it becomes almost

impossible for you to be free. A student is studying for fifteen to twenty years, during which time the

structure of his mind will be fixed. Afterwards it is very difficult to be free from that structure unless

a person is adventurous and courageous.

Is there something wrong with that structure which is educating us? Certainly it must be wrong,

because the outcome is wrong – and it is the outcome which decides if something is right or wrong.

Copilul e plin de frustrari.E premiat daca e primul. E isultat daca e slab, e umilit daca nu stie

. A sort of mad race for being something or the other takes hold of

them for their whole life. In this mad race the whole peace, energy and capability in their lives gets

destroyed.

What do they achieve in the end? In the end, they reach nowhere. Wherever they reach, they will

find someone ahead of them. And as long as there is someone ahead, they will have no peace.

There has been nobody in the world so far who has experienced being ahead of everybody; there is

always someone in front. The world is big and we are standing in a circle. In a circle who is ahead

and who is behind? Everyone is ahead of everyone else. And then the race goes on and on and on.

So far in the world nobody has got ahead of everybody. But we are still teaching children to come

first; we are teaching madness. They will remain in the race throughout their life and will waste it.

Our whole education is based on jealousy and envy. We go on saying to people, ”Do not be envious,

violent and jealous,” but our whole education is rooted in jealousy. We point to one child and say to

the other, ”See how intelligent he is, and how dull you are. Be like him!” Thus we are creating envy

and jealousy.

What are we creating in the mind of this child? We are pouring the poison of envy into him. We do

not love this child. This poison will flow through his veins, through his mind, for his whole life. The

child will always want to be ahead of everyone – and the joke of it all is that nobody ever has been

ahead of all, and there is no joy in being ahead. What has joy to do with being ahead of somebody?

What relation can peace have to being ahead of somebody? No, this is a fundamentally wrong

teaching.

The center of education should be love.

What do I mean by love? If we want to learn music – and we are so many sitting here – and if in our

effort to learn music we try not to allow anybody to get ahead of us in music... can we learn music

in such haste and fever? If we fall into that race to remain ahead so that nobody insults or disgraces

us, so that nobody proves that we are unsuccessful and we are nobody, can we learn music? Will

this be love of music or love of ego? If it is love of ego, then music cannot be learned. Can we learn

music while loving the ego?

For learning, humility is required. Our educational system teaches ego, not humility. Teachers are all

displeased and complaining that there is no humility in the students. How can the teachers expect

humility? When we teach students to be ahead of everyone, we are teaching them ego. How can

there be humility in them? It is a fallacy to expect that. When they stand ahead of others, their

humility is destroyed and they are full of ego. Those suffering from ego cannot learn music, cannot

learn anything.

To learn anything, humility is required. To learn, egolessness is required. But we are not

encouraging egolessness. We are, as it were, firing their ego by telling them, ”You have to come first

and secure a gold medal in university. You have to be a Bharat-Ratna” – the highest title conferred

on an individual by the president of India – ”You have to be the president”; ”You have to be this and

that!” The fire of envy is created in their mind – their ego is encouraged. How can they learn music?

How can they learn mathematics? How can they learn the essentials of life? For learning anything,

a nonambitious, non-competitive mind is required.

Yes, there is another basis for learning music. That is love of music, not competition with the knower

of music. Not competition with a fellow student, but love, sincerity and delight in the subject to be

learned is required. It is better that we teach love for mathematics, rather than competition with

others learning mathematics. It is better that we create love for music, rather than competition with

others who are learning music. Music can be learned because of the love for music. Everything can

be learned when we love that thing; then only is it possible to learn. But we are not taught what love

is. Our education has nothing to do with love.

ambition, which naturally creates a world full of ambitious fights, battles and conflicts.

 These children will grow up tomorrow and will fight. They will fight as a crowd, as a society,

as a cult, or as a nation, because they have to be ahead of everyone.

All countries of the world are fighting. Why are they fighting? – because the children have been

taught nothing else but fighting. They have not been taught love, they have been taught jealousy

and envy. Two world wars were fought recently in which about one hundred million people were

killed. There must be something wrong with the education. What sort of education is this, which

enables the killing of millions of people over five to ten years? What sort of students have come

out of the universities? How diseased are their minds? How is it possible that wars continue to be

fought in this world every day and the universities also continue to grow?

If the education is true and the universities are real, wars must disappear from the world. There

would be no wars – because how can an educated person fight? Can a cultured, civilized person

fight? Can he kill? – not one or two persons but millions of people? But that is what we are doing.

A well educated student will fight and go to wars! He cannot be aware of the strategies that cause

war, because in him only the seeds of war have been sown. The seeds to fight with everyone else

have been sown in him. In fact he will be interested in war, he will be happy fighting.

You may have observed that when there is war you feel happy. It certainly is a diseased state of mind.

When passing by and seeing two persons fighting, hundreds of people will form a crowd watching

the fight, putting aside many necessary, important things needing to be attended to. What madness!

Watching two persons fighting is a sign of a perverted mind,.it is not a sign of a cultured mind. To

be interested in seeing two persons fight is a sign of an ugly mind. But people throughout the whole

world are doing this. It is true for every country. Our mind is prepared for that.

When one person is defeated and the other has won, we garland the one who has won and disregard

the one who is defeated. This is a sign of a perverted mind. This is a sign of a violent and a wicked

mind. After all, what is so great that makes you garland a winner and disregard the one who is

defeated? Don’t you see the diseased mind of the person doing this? Should there be love and

sympathy for the man who is defeated or not? Or should we become full of respect for the winner?

If the education was right, love and respect towards the defeated would arise. One would feel

amazed upon seeing this person who wanted to win, who wanted to defeat someone. What a

violent attitude this man must have! There is violence in defeating someone, there is hatred in

defeating someone. The very effort to defeat someone is a proof of a perverted mind, proof of a

diseased mind. But we always respect the one who wins, we disregard the one who is defeated.

Why? – because we ourselves want to win. We are supporters of those who have won because we

also want to win. In our mind also the same interest in winning is working. We are also interested in

sitting on the chest of another person, so we garland the one who succeeds and forget the one who

has fallen; there is no value in a defeated person. This is fundamentally wrong.

Try to understand why there is ambition within us. What is the reason for our running so madly?

The

reason is that the more a person is suffering from inferiority, the more ambitious he becomes. The

more inferiority you experience, the more you feel that you are nothing, the more you will become

ambitious. Why? Through ambition, you want to prove yourself in the eyes of the world and in your

own eyes, so that nobody makes the mistake of considering you inferior.

I will tell you a small story to help you understand. You may have heard the name of Tamerlane –

he fought and defeated a small country. The king of that country was Baijal; he was arrested and

brought before Tamerlane, duly handcuffed. Defeated, Baijal stood in front of Tamerlane, who was

sitting on a throne with his advisers and soldiers standing by.

Tamerlane began to laugh. It was natural that Baijal should get angry; Baijal, though defeated, was

a king. He lifted his head proudly and told Tamerlane not to be foolish. ”He who laughs at others’

defeat has some day to shed tears at his own defeat.”

But Tamerlane said, ”I am not laughing at your defeat. I am not so foolish as to laugh over such a

small victory. I am laughing at the fact that I am a lame man and you are a man with one eye. How

strange God is, that he gives kingships to lame and one-eyed men!”

If I were present at that time I would have told Tamerlane that nobody else asks for kingships except

for those who are lame and blind. No wise person would like to become a king. No wise person

would like to become a politician. No wise person would want to sit on the chest of another person.

No wise person would like to bring someone else down to his feet or be his owner. All these things

are desired by the diseased and inferior man residing within us.

The mental states of inferiority and weaknesses within us – the lameness and blindness – want to

be hidden. We are running to hide them and to prove that the whole world is wrong, that we are

alright. We have proved our might, and we are trying to prove to others that we are not weak or

wanting. This is the race of the inferior mind.

I will tell you another story. There were two hermits in Japan. It was the rainy season, the rains

had just begun, and one evening when they came back home, they saw that half of their hut was

destroyed; the winds had blown away the roof. One of the hermits was very angry with God.

He complained, ”The heavy, rainy season has set in, clouds have gathered and half of our hut

is destroyed. What will happen to us now? How shall we live?” And it is in such moments that doubt

arises if God really exists or not. ”The big palaces of sinful people are intact, and God is not thinking

of blowing away their palaces, but he blows away the huts of us poor people.”

The next night that hermit wrote a song: ”Until now we had not known that joy which people with

half a roof have. Last night we were sleeping under half of the roof, and the moon was so beautiful

seen from the other, roofless half of the hut. Whenever our eyes opened during the night we saw the

stars too and fell peacefully back into sleep. This morning when I got up I was full of a joy, unknown

before. Had God given me the hint, even in a dream, I would have removed half of the roof myself

much earlier. There was no need for the cyclone to be bothered about it. But I was not aware of it.”

Everything depends on how we take things and with what attitude we accept what we have. Our

current education creates wrong attitudes from the very beginning. What is created is not an

acceptance of things but a race for things. We think of what others are having – we are never

aware of what we have. In such a situation, life begins on a wrong track. Then only death is able to

free us from this misery; nothing else helps. This is the result of wrong education.

Right education will teach us how to develop what we have in ourselves – but comparison, never.

As soon as comparison enters the mind, the problems begin. But our present atmosphere supports

comparison.

The birthday of a cobbler is never celebrated by anyone, but the birthday of a politician is celebrated.

Why? What significance is there in a politician? What are the reasons? What good deeds has the

politician done for the world that you are so obsessed? None. It is just because he has a high

position, is occupying a high chair, that his birthday is celebrated. We have compared things in a

wrong way.

You may have heard about Abraham Lincoln. His father was a cobbler and Abraham became a

president of America. Many people must have become very unhappy at a cobbler’s son becoming a

president. The same would be the feeling if it happened in our country. So, when he stood up for his

first speech in the senate, it was beyond the tolerance of one member. It was beyond the tolerance

of others too, but those who were a little more cultured remained sitting silently, suppressing their

dislike. That one member stood up and addressing the president said, ”Don’t assume any airs while

making a speech – your father used to stitch shoes.”

Ordinarily people feel it is a lowly occupation to stitch shoes, although everyone wears shoes.

Wearing them is not bad, it is stitching them that is bad! This world is really in a mess. If stitching

shoes is inferior, then wearing them should be more so. What sort of madness is this!

What did Lincoln say in reply? He seems to have been a man of deep thinking. He said, ”I know.

As far as I can remember, my father used to stitch the best of shoes. You have reminded me of my

father at the right moment. I recollect that the family of the gentleman who has reminded me has

been wearing shoes stitched by my father. May I ask if my father ever stitched shoes that were not

right? Were they weak, badly shaped, or did they wear out faster than they should? I remember he

was stitching shoes with such joy that whosoever bought from him was very pleased with them. It

will be difficult for me to be as good a president as my father was a cobbler.”

If the right education was available, the prestige which becomes associated with positions,

professions and things would disappear. There should be no stigma attached to making shoes,

in baking bread or making bricks or building a house. Nobody is higher or lower – they are all

participating together in helping the same life.

Everything is needed in life. People making or cleaning roads are needed, and people preparing

bricks are needed, as much as people ruling a country. Nobody is inferior, nobody is lower. There is

no status for anyone; everybody together is creating a life of interdependence. Life is a cooperation.

Nobody is higher in it, nobody is lower in it. The peon is not in any way inferior to the president. As

long as these ideas of inferiority and superiority remain, there can be no peace for the human mind...

because then the peon would want to be the president – it is natural – or if that is not possible, he

would want his son to be a president. It is natural, he would want that.

The day on which our education does not associate the dignity of a person with his position or nature

of work, the day on which we accept the importance of all work equally, for the benefit of life as a

whole, we shall understand that the value of a cobbler and tailor is as much as that of a musician.

The question is of how good and of what quality is the work one is doing, not what one is doing.

Kabir was a weaver, weaving cloth. People asked him to stop doing such work; it was not befitting

a saint. He said, ”If it befits a saint to wear clothes, why should it not befit him to make the clothes?

He would go to the market dancing, and ask as to which god was going to accept his labor and

prayer. He touched the feet of the person who bought his cloth, saying, ”Oh God, wear the cloth

carefully. I have woven it with great care and love, prayerfully and laboriously.”

But is it wrong to weave cloth? Is it wrong to be a weaver? Nothing is wrong in life; everything,

every work is required for life. There should be no status or position attached to any work. But our

education is totally wrong. The peon in a school has no dignity. If that is really so, would any child

like to be a peon?

It depends on the youth to change the outlook and bring about a revolution. Till then, thinking in

terms of inferiority and superiority is going to continue.

A few days ago I was invited – probably by mistake on the part of the organizers – to give a talk on

Teachers’ Day. They said it is a great honor for teachers that a teacher has become a president. I

said, ”That is wrong. The teacher’s honor is in being a good teacher, not in becoming a president.

If all the teachers start running in the race to become a president, it will be a calamity.” But that

race is on. If they cannot become the president, they will want to be a state education minister or a

vice-chancellor or something else.

It is altogether wrong. The respect and honor of a teacher is in being a good teacher. If a good

teacher starts trying to become a president, it is not an honor for the teacher. One can understand a

president giving up his position and becoming a teacher, but not vice versa. Why? – because what

comparison is there between a teacher and a politician? Becoming a politician is a fall for a teacher.

It will be a growth for a politician if he becomes a teacher. Being a teacher is the simplest profession,

a noble livelihood. It is a very fundamental basis for life. Teaching is not just a profession, it is a joy,

a service, a creation, a devotion in itself. Anyone leaving it for something else will not be and should

not be respected. But in our mind, politics and position have become very important. We are very

strange people: a person sitting on a small stool becomes small!

A person I know narrated an incident. There was a magistrate in Madras, a British magistrate. He

must have been a little idiosyncratic – though it is a little difficult to decide who is not idiosyncratic at

all, one way or another. He was sitting in a sort of courtroom. Whenever anyone came to meet him,

he would order a particular type of seat for him.

He kept seven different types of seats in another room. According to status, position, wealth, he

would order a seat to be brought in. A small stool was meant for an ordinary person, who might

have to be allowed to sit. A poor person need not sit; he can say whatever he wants to while

standing in front of the magistrate. After the small stool, there was the number two stool, a little

better; then, third, a chair, stronger than a stool; then a better chair, and so on and so forth, up to

number seven.

One day a person came who appeared to be poor. At first the magistrate thought of asking him to

speak while standing, but on entering he said, ”I am a land-tenancy holder in a particular town.” The

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magistrate asked his peon to bring number two. The peon went outside and while he was bringing

the number two seat in, the man said, ”I was awarded the title of ’Rai Bahadur’ by the government.”

On hearing that the magistrate asked his peon to bring the number four seat. As the peon was

hurrying with the number four seat, the visitor said, ”... And I recently donated a couple of million

rupees to the War Fund.” The magistrate shouted his modified order to the peon for seat number

six, when the visitor interrupted, ”Why do you harass the peon? Call for the number seven seat,

because I have still to tell you more about myself by way of introduction. So better just call for the

number seven seat.”

We may laugh at such an idiosyncratic person, but we are all like him. In our mind there is respect

for a president, for a prime minister or for a governor. Do we have any love and respect for just a

man as such – just empty, without any name, position, title or certificate, and whose pockets are

also empty? If we do not have any respect for just a man, then remember that we have respect for

nobody at all; what we have is respect for chairs, big and small.

But all this is what education teaches us. It is all rubbish, only worth burning. The whole educational

arrangement is wrong. It is necessary to lay new foundations. Those new foundations will be that

we should be taught love, not competition. We should be taught respect for a human being as such,

not respect for position or money. It is necessary that respect should not be associated with the

nature of a person’s work. An attitude should be created where the whole life is considered a joint

contribution of all people. Then with such a mental frame we can understand what the potential of

an individual is, without any comparisons and evaluations.

As I told you earlier this morning, there is no necessity to compare, because every individual is

unique in himself. It is not necessary to say that you are weaker than a certain man, or more

intelligent or less handsome than a certain man. All such comparisons are dangerous and violent.

The whole problem arises from that. Every person should be accepted as he is and his potential

allowed to develop.

A rose is a rose, and a jasmine a jasmine. One tree will be tall and another short. A small grass

flower is there – but it has its own dignity and joy. What is mysterious and significant is that that

grass flower should fully blossom, not remain half-way on its journey. It need not be compared with

a roseflower. The roseflower has its own delight in flowering, and the grass flower has its own.

A small bird sings its song and a big bird sings its own. It is not a question of who has sung a

better song, but the question is whether one could sing fully to one’s heart’s content. There is no

comparison of one with the other.

Every individual is a unique creation of God, and we must accept him as such. We should keep in

mind that our whole education, culture and civilization should draw out whatsoever is hidden and

awaiting growth, and should not let anything remain dormant. This should happen, not in any haste,

not with any dubious approach or competition, but through love and joy.

When all the potentialities of a person develop in their fullness and flower, he is full of joy. Then

he has flowered; he is fragrant and peaceful. Such a person can search for truth and God and can

know and experience truth. Only one who is peaceful in life can enter deeper into life. Whoever

is in competition and disturbed will have no peace. Whosoever is peaceful, who accepts himself,

who is joyful and fragrant due to his own flowering, will slowly receive automatically the messages

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of godliness; he will start experiencing godliness all around. A miserable man can never know God.

When all the doors of bliss open within, only then begins the experiencing of God.

So the ultimate aim of education should be such as to lead every man to the total fulfillment of his

soul and its experience. But at present the situation is such that a person is not able to experience

happiness and peace in the world. God remains a faraway journey and destination. Because of

this, because of his endless problems, man goes to the temple, puts money in the donation boxes,

bows down to the priest. This is all useless. To save himself from tension, he seeks the help of God.

When he is defeated in the elections, he seeks the help of God and gets amulets prepared, or takes

tips from so-called religious priests to win at the racecourse.

Somebody was asking me yesterday if I give tips to win on the racecourse or not. All sadhus and

sannyasins in our country do this. I said, ”I am a very ordinary man, neither a sadhu nor a hermit;

how can I give any such tips?” But there are great sadhus, sannyasins and mahatmas who can do

that. Or if you come across God, he can help you. I am helpless. But all these kinds of things go on

– tips about horses and how to win elections. Those sadhus and mahatmas wander around Delhi

because all the defeated and the winners both then touch their feet.

Tense, fearful, defeated and miserable people go to seek solace from religion. Such a religion

becomes false. The very reason why these people go there is irreligious. Only a person who has

pacified his mind in every way, whose mind has no struggles and knows no conflicts, whose mind

is full of love and respect, who is compassionate to all and not envious, can reach anywhere near

religion. One day God himself knocks at his door and puts a hand on his shoulder. Religious

teaching does not mean repeating the Gita or the Koran. It is because of them that there is so much

irreligion in the world.

The religious teaching should create a mind which is noncompetitive, nonjealous, nonviolent, loving

and compassionate. Such a religious education will not make a man a Hindu or a Jaina or a

Mohammedan. These are madnesses, they are diseases. No healthy and centered person can

be a Hindu or a Mohammedan; he can only be religious.

I have told you a few things. If you try to understand your individuality against this background –

and think a little about whether you should really be competitive and envious or seek the path of

peace, love and joy, and awaken some inner potential in yourself which releases the fragrance of

bliss – only then can you be a student in the right sense. Now, when the university is not right, the

educational system is not right, where will we look for a solution? The teachers are not right, the

educational system is not right; who will do this work?

The youth can do it. In them there are sparks of rebellion although in India the spark has almost died

out. For thousands of years the youth have not been born here. There is no spirit of rebellion here,

only ashes. But still, if there is any hope, it is only with the young people. If the young people rebel

against the whole educational apparatus and system, and get ready to shatter all these structures,

then if not today, tomorrow, the warmongering world can be ended; the world which believes in

nations can be ended. These borders, India and Pakistan, all these idiocies can be ended; these

walls between Hindus and Jainas can be ended. One human culture can take birth.

Education and Religion

For five thousand years such education has been given, but it has not been able to create a better man or a better society. But more bloodshed, violence and irreligiousness has happened in the name of Hinduism, Mohammedanism or Christianity than anything else.

It is very surprising to find that the atheists – who do not believe in any religion – have not been

responsible for such ugly crimes. Great crimes are committed by theists.

 If a religious civilization has to be created it will be neither Hindu nor Mohammedan; it will neither be

of the East nor of the West. Such a civilization will belong to the whole man, will belong to all and

be for all. It cannot belong to any section or division, because as long as we divide humanity we will

not be free from rivalries and wars. As long as there are walls dividing man from man, how can we

create a society which will live in love and bliss? Whichever society has been created so far has not

been based on love.

During three thousand years, fifteen thousand wars have been fought. Fifteen thousand wars in

three thousand years? How unpleasant even to think about it. So many wars cannot be fought

for no reason. Five wars every year – what does it indicate? There is only a small span of three

hundred years during which there was no war. These three hundred years are not in one stretch, but

are made up of sometimes one day, sometimes two days, sometimes ten days of no war. Altogether

there were three hundred years of peace. Three hundred years of peace and three thousand years

of war? Certainly such peace cannot be true; it must be peace only in name. Even the period of

peace is false: actually what we call the days of peace are the days spent in preparing for another

war.

I am dividing the history of man in two parts – one, the period of war and the other, the period

of preparations for war. We have really not known any period of peace. In creating this situation,

the division of humanity into many parts is basically responsible. And who has divided humanity?

Is it not the religions, ideologies, doctrines and cults that have divided it? Is it not the nations,

nationalities and confinements of ideologies that have divided it? It is mainly the religions that have

divided humanity.

Behind all the quarrels and conflicts there are isms. Whether those isms are religious or political,

they create conflict, and conflict ultimately leads to wars. Even today Soviet communism and

American democracy have broken into two religions. It has become like a war between two religions.

But I ask if it is not possible to stop the division of humanity which is done on the basis of thoughts.

Is it right that for an insubstantial thing like thought, we should kill human beings? Is it right that your

thought and my thought should make our hearts enemies of one another?

But so far this is all that has happened. And up till now unions formed in the names of nations and

religions have not been unions of our love, but unions of our hatred. So you know that if the poison

of hatred is spread forcefully, anyone can be made to unite. Adolf Hitler has said somewhere that

if any race has to be united, it is necessary to create hatred for some other race. He not only said

this, but he also did it and found it effective.

All mischief-mongers making this earth poisonous have found this method effective. By the slogan

”Mohammedanism in danger,” Mohammedans can be made to unite, and by the slogan ”Hinduism

in danger,” Hindus can be made to unite. Danger creates fear, and there is hatred towards those of

whom we are afraid. Thus all unions and organizations are based on hatred and fear. So while all

religions talk of love because they need unity, they ultimately take only the help of hatred. Then love

becomes only idle talk and hatred becomes the foundation.

So the religion I am talking about is not any union or organization, it is a spiritual endeavor. It is an

experience of the individual, it is not interested in collecting a crowd. In fact, religious experience is

basically individualistic.

And all our organizations are founded on some hatred. What relation can hatred have with religion?

Whatsoever creates hatred between you and me cannot be religion. Only whatsoever creates love

between you and me can be religion. Remember, whatsoever divides man from man, how can it

ever join man with God? It is not possible. But what we call religion divides us. Though the so-called

religions talk about love, talk about unity among all and talk about brotherhood, it is puzzling that the

talk remains only talk, and whatsoever they do spreads enmity and hatred. Christianity talks about

love, but nobody else has killed as many people as Christians have. Mohammedanism is a religion

of peace, but who else has succeeded more in bringing unrest?

Perhaps good things become instrumental in hiding bad things. If you want to kill people, you can

do so easily in the name of love. If one wants to be violent, one can easily be violent in protecting

nonviolence. If I want to kill you, I can easily do so for your own good – because in that case you will

die but I will not be considered guilty. Then you will die, you will be killed and you will not complain.

It is said that man is an intellectual animal, so naturally, everything he wants to do he finds an

intellectual way to do it. The devil has perhaps advised him to select a good slogan for doing a bad

thing. The more evil a deed is, the better should be the slogan.

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**CHAPTER 4. EDUCATION AND RELIGION**

The organizations created in the name of religion have neither any relationship with God nor with

love or prayer or religion. It is only your hatred and jealousy that are organized; otherwise, how is it

possible that mosques are broken, temples are burned, idols are destroyed and people are killed?

But this is happening and has been happening for a long time. If this is religion, my question is:

What is irreligion then? Fanaticism is not religion. It is only the hidden form of irreligion.

So the first condition for education in religion is freedom of religion from all sects.

But the so-called religious people are giving nothing but sectarian poison to children in the name of

religion. Why do they want to do it? Are they really interested in religion? No, they are interested in

”their” religion. Such interest itself is irreligious. Whenever religion becomes yours or mine, it ceases

to be a religion. Wherever there is no mine or thine, there is the beginning that leads to the divine.

In the interest shown by the so-called religious people for religious education, there are selfish

motives which have deep and ancient roots on which many types of exploitations depend. If the new

generations escape from the prisons in which they are kept, a fundamental revolution is possible in

the life of a society. Such a revolution will have multiple results in that all types of vested interests

will be hurt, and those who are living by making man fight with man will lose their livelihood. All

those who have made religious intrigues their profession will also become unemployed. Then it will

not be possible to protect class exploitation and class interests, to exploit by dividing – because so

far only so-called religions have devised such protection in many forms.

In the name of religious education the old generation wants to pass on to the new generations their

ignorance, blind faith, fanaticism, diseases and enmities. Their ego is satisfied in that way. This ego

does not allow man to be free from unhealthy thought patterns. There is no bigger obstacle than

this on the way to development. Development is possible only where there is rebellion.

The old generation’s ego cannot accept any rebellion because it craves faithfulness, obedience and

discipline. It educates the new generations for that. It wants to kill all that potential of the new

generation which can inspire it to reject the old and set out to discover the new. But this foeticide

is perpetrated in a very indirect way. Perhaps these people themselves are not aware fully of what

is happening; it is an unconscious process. Their forefathers and teachers also had done the same

thing to them. Unknowingly they continue to do the same thing to their children and pupils.

This vicious circle is ancient, but it has to be broken because it is not allowing life to unite with the

truth of religion. Where is the center of this vicious circle? The central concept is: before the small

children begin to think, seeds of belief have to be sown in them, because the mind full of belief is

incapable of thinking.

The directions of belief and thinking are opposite. Belief is blindness; thinking is finding one’s own

eyes. By being blinded with belief, the children are deprived of their eyes forever. It is for such

a harmful purpose that so-called religious people are so keen to give religious education. This

keenness is not good. Actually there is no greater sin than killing the capacity to think. But parents

have been constantly committing the same sin with their children, and this is the basic reason why

the birth of true religion has not taken place.

Thinking is to be taught, not belief.

Then only will religion cease to be blind faith and become a supreme science. With such a science,

education can have a beneficial relationship. It is not by blind faith, but by testing the scientific truths

on the touchstone of discriminatory thinking that man can be benefited.

Are you not aware that people living in the darkness of belief slowly become incapable of coming

into the light of thinking? Their eyes become incapable of seeing anything but darkness. And they

are training their children in this darkness so that they do not need to accept that they are blind

themselves. It is convenient this way – to believe that they are right. Whenever some child is able to

save his eyes, in spite of this collective conspiracy, it is well known what they do with him. They do

what they have done with Socrates and with Christ.

So while thinking about imparting education in religion, it is necessary to make sure that we are not

planning to teach darkness in the name of light. So far, in the name of being given eyes, people

are deprived of eyes. All beliefs are nothing but ignorance and darkness, so it is necessary to save

children from beliefs.

It is possible to save children only if they are made capable of sharp and deep thinking. So develop

the power of thinking in them. Don’t give them thoughts, but give them the power to think. Giving

thoughts is as good as giving beliefs. Given thoughts will be yours; the power of thinking will be their

own. Only the full development of the power of thinking can make children capable of discovering

the truth of life. Thinking is the path – belief is going astray.

So I say that whoever is bound in belief can never think. Neither a Hindu, nor a Jaina, nor a

communist, can think; his belief is his bondage. Since thinking may destroy his beliefs, he prefers

not to think. It may become his protective amulet, but in fact such an amulet is nothing but suicide.

Is not belief the murder of thinking? But this murder is committed knowingly or unknowingly. A

Hindu father wants to make his son a Hindu, and a Mohammedan father wants to make his son a

Mohammedan – that too when the child is very small and incapable of thinking and understanding.

Such a wrong thing can only be done at an unripe age; it is difficult to do so afterwards. Once the

power of thinking and logic has arisen it is not possible to throw dust in his eyes. The ability to think

protects the individual, so it is no wonder if so-called religious people are against reasoning.

So innocent children should not be tied down with unintelligent beliefs and concepts; rather, their

intelligence should be given such sharpness and depth that it will enable them to keep their thinking

conscious and free, and they will never be willing to sell it at any cost. Only such free consciousness

can open the doors to truth.

In fact freedom is the door to truth.

So give freedom to children and create respect for freedom in their minds. Make them cautious and

aware of all types of slaveries of consciousness and mind. Real education in religion can only be

this.

But the teaching of religions is not such; it is just the opposite. It is only a training in slavery, because

it is supportive of belief and not thinking. It is in favor of blindness, rather than eyes. It is based on

following others and not on one’s own consciousness.

Why are religions so afraid of thinking? Certainly the fear is not without any reason. The most

important and solid reason is this, that if the thinking is conscious and active, many religions cannot

last for too long. Religiousness will be there but the existence of religions will certainly be in danger,

because the natural flow of thinking is towards universal truth. Just as the rivers flow towards the

ocean, all thinking flows towards universality. Only the truth that abides after impartial investigation

finally remains. And truth cannot be more than one, it is always one.

Because science followed right thinking, the arithmetic of Hindus and Christians is not separate. On

the basis of belief it would not be possible that arithmetic be one. The pools of belief do not flow;

they are closed unto themselves. Since they cannot flow towards the ocean, they can never reach

to that which is one. Their very confinement in themselves makes them many.

Thinking is a flow – belief is stagnation.

Thinking is a constant transcendence of oneself.

Belief is to be imprisoned in oneself.

So from wheresoever thinking begins, in the end it leads to the central and ultimate truth. Belief

prevents one from reaching that far.

I have heard that there existed a geography of the Jainas. Such funny things happen with religions!

Can geography also be separate? Yes, if belief is the basis, it can be. Where there is no thinking,

there is only fantasy, following and blind faith. And these can be separate for every individual. Truth

is one, but the dreams of every person can be different. Even if two persons want to, they cannot

have the same dream together.

Truth is always the same for all because it is residing in one’s self. It is not imagination, a dream or

an inference of any individual. One must deserve first to know the truth. To be able to see it, one

must have healthy and open eyes. Such eyes are obtained only in perfect thinking and in the light of

intelligence.

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That is why I am repeatedly saying that if you want to give truth to children, give them the capacity to

think. Make them free from just belief and give them intelligence. The awakened energy of thinking

will make them capable of seeing and it will become their seeing. That alone will lead them to the

ocean of truth, which is one and nondual.

Do you know that a person like Aristotle has written that women have fewer teeth than men? How

could he write this? Did he not have a woman available to enable him to count her teeth? There is

no dearth of women. But he just accepted a current belief, so there remained no question of any

investigation. He himself had not one but two wives; he could have asked one of them to open her

mouth for him to count her teeth. But no, when he did not doubt the current belief, how could he

think? He just agreed to the blind belief of males that women have fewer teeth than men. In fact the

male ego is never ready to accept that women can be equal to men in anything whatsoever, even

if the matter is just of teeth! If a person of the stature of Aristotle did not doubt, who else can? –

though doubt is in fact the beginning of all search.

The very first step to be taught in the search for truth is right doubt. A good beginning of religious

education should be that. The real foundation of religion is doubt, not trust.

Doubt is the beginning, trust is the end.

Doubt is the search, trust is the achievement.

So whosoever begins with doubt, sometime or other does reach trust. But one who begins from

trust reaches nowhere. There is no question of his reaching, because he has attached the bullocks

behind the cart. Beginning is possible only with that which is the beginning. How can an end be the

beginning? Where there is no doubt, there is no thinking. Where there is no thinking, there is no

intelligence. Where there is no intelligence, there is no truth.

Religions have taught belief – neither doubt nor search.

Religion will teach one to doubt, to think and to search. Only whatsoever is obtained by one’s own

search is self-transforming, and is the truth.

Truth is a continuous search. It is an investigation with extreme awareness. Truth cannot be

transferred by one to the other, it has to be searched for by one’s own self. Truth cannot be borrowed;

it is the fruition of one’s own efforts. Education in religion is a preparation for such a search.

So as long as religion is related to belief, there can be no education in religion. It may be called

education in religion but it will be only Hindu, Mohammedan or Christian. Such education is not

religious, because people educated like this become narrow-minded. That way heartfulness cannot

arise. Such people are full of prejudices. Their intelligence does not become free, but it dies. Such

people become old in the mind, whereas for any search the mind must be fresh and young.

Only those who are impartial are young. Only those are young who have not allowed their

consciousness to be imprisoned in conditioning. The conditioned mind becomes old, and the more

conditioned it is, the more idiotic. Conditioning is not religion. Only the consciousness which is free

of all conditioning can enter into religion.

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**CHAPTER 4. EDUCATION AND RELIGION**

Religion is your nature, your own self. Conditioning comes from outside; it is an outsider. Just as

dust covers the mirror, conditioning covers consciousness. To cover the mirror of consciousness with

traditions, conditionings, orthodoxies, beliefs and ideals in the name of religion is not to be allowed:

it has to remain free of them. The real education and search for religion makes one proceed in the

direction of freedom. Religion is the only means that frees the mind of all complexes, but the religion

that is sold in the market cannot do that work.

So before religion enters education, it will have to give up its old clothes and abode. It can become

the soul of new generations only by itself acquiring a new soul.

Religion is certainly to be brought into our lives. Without it our life is very handicapped, incomplete

and unbalanced. If we continue to think of the outer only, the inner will remain empty. If our eyes are

focussed only on matter, we will remain deprived of God. That will be a costly bargain, because we

will be losing diamonds and taking stones instead. What is the outer compared to the inner? What

is the wealth of the world compared to the wealth of God? We have to know that which is the very

life and center of all, and we have to make its search our central concern, because the search for

the center can never be completed without making the search central.

So I do not want religion just to be related to education, because that is insufficient. I want to see

religion become the center of all education, because it is essential that the center of life be the center

of education too. Life does not end just at what is visible; in reality, the invisible is its basis. Without

being acquainted with the invisible, there will be no purpose or meaning in life. Where there is no

meaning, how can there be any bliss? Bliss is the attainment of meaningfulness.

Religion is a search for meaning, and science is a search for utility. Both religion and science are

incomplete. In the synthesis and balance of the two is the benediction and wholeness.

One world is outside man, but that is not all; there is another world within man. And the search

outside is ultimately for the within. While searching for the outer, the inner is not to be forgotten,

because in the search for the outer you gain strength, but you do not gain peace; you gain wealth,

but you lose your soul. What is the value of the whole world if you lose your soul? Your victory is a

defeat.

There was a Sufi saint, Rabiya. One morning her friend asked her to come out of her hut. He said,

”A beautiful sun is rising in the sky and the morning is pleasant.”

Rabiya replied, ”My dear friend, I invite you to come within, because I am seeing within the creator

of that sun and the morning. Is it not better that you come inside? I have seen the outer beauty very

well, but you are perhaps unacquainted with what is inside.”

There is one world outside. Certainly it is beautiful. Those who want to set man against the outer

world are ignorant. Those who are condemning this outer world are against the good of man. The

outer world is really beautiful, but there is another inner world which is limitlessly more beautiful.

One who stops at the outer world stops at the incomplete. He has made camp very early; he has

misunderstood the road to be the destination. He has mistaken the door for the palace and has

stopped at the entrance. He has to be awakened and alerted. His eyes have to be drawn towards

the destination. Once that is done he himself will continue his journey further.

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**CHAPTER 4. EDUCATION AND RELIGION**

The aim of education in religion is to see that children remain always aware of this destination and

don’t stop midway. It is necessary to know that science is a search only into that which is outside.

The outer search alone is incomplete. Education must be related with the inner search.

But the religions that we know do not go in search of the inner. They talk about the inner, but they

are lying, because their temples and mosques are built outside and their idols are also outside.

Their scriptures are outside, their doctrines are outside, and they are seen fighting over these outer

things. Their insistence is only on the outer, so they cannot take man into his inner abode.

A negro went to a church one morning and requested the priest of the church to allow him to enter.

But how can a man with black skin enter into a church of people with white skin? These people who

talk about the inner also see the color of the skin. These people who talk of God also see whether a

man is a brahmin or a sudra. The priest of the church said, ”Friend, what will you do, coming inside

the church? As long as your mind is not pure and peaceful, what can you do by coming into the

church?”

Because the times have changed, the priest has changed his language also. Before he used to say,

”Go away, nigger. How can you enter here?” He has changed his language, but his heart has not

changed; even now he does not allow the black man in. But he did not say, ”You are a sudra and

therefore impious, so go away!” He said, ”Friend, what will you do by coming in? How will you know

God till your mind is pure and peaceful? So first go and purify your mind.”

But he had not said such a thing to any people with white skin... as if they had all attained peace of

mind. The simple negro went away. The priest must have laughed within. He may have thought that

now the negro will not come back, because he cannot purify his mind. In fact, the black man did not

come back, not because his mind could not become peaceful, but because his mind had become

peaceful.

Many days passed by... about a year passed. Then one day the priest saw that black man passing

near the church. He had become a different man altogether. In his eyes there was some light of

the other world. Around him it was as if there was an aura of peace and music. The priest thought

perhaps he was coming into the church. He was a little afraid too, but his fear was baseless; the

negro did not even look at the church but went on straight ahead.

Then the priest ran after him and stopping him, asked, ”Friend, you did not come back again?”

The negro laughed and said, ”My friend and guide, I thank you very much. I have passed the whole

year according to your advice. I was expecting to become peaceful so that I could come into the

church. But last night in my dream I saw God, who told me, ’You madman! Why did you want go to

that church to meet me? For the last ten years I myself have been trying to enter the church, but the

priest does not allow me to do so. Where I have not been able to enter, it is impossible that you will

be allowed!’”

I can tell you that God has not only not been able to enter that church, he has not been able to enter

any church or temple – because churches and temples built by men have not been bigger than man;

these temples are so small that there is no place for God in them. In reality, those whose minds are

themselves not temples can build only meaningless temples. Those who have not found him within

cannot find him on the outside.

The divine first manifests within oneself, and then manifests everywhere. Except one’s own self,

there is neither any path nor bridge to the whole. One’s own self is the nearest to oneself, so it is

better to search within before you search without. One who cannot find the divine in the nearby,

cannot find it in the faraway. The divine has been known and can be known only in the heart, not in

the temples. So the temples and the mosques cannot and should not be connected with education.

Insistence upon such a connection is for the outer. All such outer phenomena become obstacles for

going within.

When I hear talk about building temples in universities, I laugh. I wonder if man is learning anything

from history. Do we not know what the religions of temples and mosques have done? No, there is

no necessity for outside rituals of religions. It would be tolerable if such rituals were only useless,

but they are disastrous. There is no religion in the outer, so it is irreligious to give any value to the

outer. It is very necessary to be as clear about this truth as one is about the fact that two plus two

makes four.

There is a temple of God, but it is not made of stones and bricks. Whatsoever is made of stones and

bricks can be of a Hindu, a Christian, a Jaina or a Buddhist, but not of God. Whatsoever belongs to

somebody just for that reason does not belong to God. His temple can have no limits because he is

limitless. His temple can have no epithet because he is the whole. Certainly, such a temple can be

only of consciousness. Such a temple is not there in the sky, it is in the soul. It has not to be made,

it is there forever; it has only to be uncovered.

So a religion related to education cannot be one that builds temples and mosques. It can be a

religion that uncovers the temple hidden within the self. Whatsoever is residing within is to be

known, because knowing that becomes a fundamental revolution in life.

Knowing the truth becomes the transformation of life.

The education which does not uncover the inner truth or God is incomplete and dangerous.

The reason for the failure of education until today is its incompleteness. The young man who comes

out of the university is very inadequate. What is central to life is not known to him. He is not

acquainted with whatever is of truth, goodness, and beauty in life. He comes out having learned the

trivial, and lives in that for his whole life.

Such a life does not bring any bliss, and slowly a meaninglessness and emptiness and futility begins

to surround the mind. The flow of life gets lost in this desert of meaninglessness, and as a result a

sort of blind anger towards everything is left. I call this anger an outcome of an irreligious mind. The

outcome of a religious mind is a sense of gratitude and benediction; it is a gratefulness towards the

whole. But this can happen only when life is blissful and total. Such bliss and totality is not possible

till one knows oneself.

So right education cannot be religionless, because knowing and being acquainted with the

foundation of life – consciousness, the interiority, the soul – is a must in bringing life to its fulfillment.

What is religion? The education of man’s interiority is religion. What shall we teach then? Should

we teach scriptures and religious principles? Or should we tell the children that there is a God, there

is a soul, heaven, hell and liberation? No, not at all. No such education is the education of religion.

Such education does not lead man to his interiority. Such education makes a man prejudiced.

Such education is only the teaching of words. It gives birth to false knowledge, which is even more

dangerous than ignorance.

Knowledge is only that which comes from self-experience. Knowledge learned from others is not

knowledge but an illusion of knowledge. Such illusion hides ignorance, and the search for knowledge

stops. A clear awareness about one’s ignorance is good because it leads one towards the search for

knowledge. It is very dangerous to think knowledge learned from others is real knowledge, because

the satisfaction that one gets through that binds one’s feet and obstructs the journey ahead.

I went once to an orphanage – there were about a hundred children. The organizers told me that they

are also giving education in religion to the children. Then they asked the children a few questions.

They were asked if there is a God. They replied ”Yes, there is a God.” They were asked, ”Where is

God?” They pointed towards the sky in reply. They were asked, ”Where is the soul?” They kept their

hands on their hearts and said, ”Here.”

I was watching this drama. The organizers were very happy. They told me to ask them some

questions. I asked one child, ”Where is the heart?” That child began to look hither and thither and

said, ”This has not been taught to us.” Can education in religion be like this? And can repeating what

is taught be called knowing? If it was such a simple matter the world would have become religious

long ago.

I told the organizers of that orphanage that whatsoever they were teaching the children is not religion

at all. On the contrary, the children will become parrotlike for their whole life. A person who learns

to repeat things mechanically paralyzes his intelligence. When questions arise in life that could lead

him to the search for truth, his learning will make him repeat what was learned and be quiet. Your

teaching will kill their inquisitiveness. They do not know either God or the soul. The hands were so

false that pointed towards their hearts! Do you call this teaching of falsehood education in religion?

I asked the organizers whether their knowledge of self was also like that of the children; whether

they were also only repeating what was taught to them. They also looked here and there, like the

child whom I had asked where his heart was. Generation after generation we go on teaching empty

words and consider it knowledge. Can truth ever be taught? Can truth be repeated?

In the world of matter there is value for what is taught, because about whatsoever is outside

no knowledge other than information is possible. But in the world of consciousness information

has neither any meaning nor value because the world of consciousness is of experience, not of

information.

It is possible to experience; one can be and live in such experience, but it cannot be taught. Learning

it can only be like acting. Can anyone learn to love? If one can love after learning it, it will only be

acting love. If love cannot be learned, how can prayer be learned? So everything learned about God

– principles, worship and prayer – has become only acting. Prayer is a deeper form of love. When

love cannot be learned, how can God be learned? The totality of love is God.

Truth is unknown, so through principles, scriptures and words which are known, one cannot reach

the truth. For entering into the unknown, whatsoever is known has to be given up. On our becoming

free of what is known, the unknown manifests before us. So religion is more of an unlearning than

a learning. Religion consists more of forgetting than of remembering. We do not have to write

anything on the mind; instead, all that is written has to be wiped out, because as soon as the mind

becomes wordless, it becomes a mirror for knowing the truth. We do not have to make the mind a

storehouse of doctrines but a mirror of truth. Then the meaning of education in religion will be more

of a seeking than indoctrination.

Preparation for religious seeking is the only education in religion. Education in religion is not like the

education in other subjects, so there can be no examination in it. Its examination will be in life; life

itself is its examination.

Except life itself, what other examination can there be of life? And religion is life itself.

So those who think that by passing examinations they have become educated are mistaken.

Actually, where the examinations are completed the real education begins, because from then on

life begins.

Then what should we do for education in religion?

The seed of religion is there in everybody because life is there in everybody. We should create

opportunities for the growth of that seed, and remove the obstacles on the path of that growth. If this

can be done, the seed sprouts on its own, out of its own strength, out of its own longing for life; it

does not have to manufacture sprouts. The sprout becomes a full-fledged plant, the plant becomes

full of leaves, flowers and fruits. We only provide an opportunity, and all else follows by itself.

How can there be an education in religion? The schools can provide the atmosphere and opportunity

for the seed of religion to sprout. The schools can help remove the obstacles to its growth. In doing

this, there are three very vital elements.

The first element is courage. One must have irrepressible courage. Courage is the basic

requirement in the search for truth and for climbing to God. Courage is needed to climb the

Himalayas and to reach the depths of the Pacific, but in the search for God, greater and deeper

courage is necessary because there is no higher peak and no deeper ocean than God. But

the so-called religious people are not courageous. In fact their religiousness is a mask for their

cowardliness. There is fear behind their religion and God. I would like to tell you that a fearful

mind can never be religious, because fearlessness is the very life of religion. Courage arises from

fearlessness.

So the first thing is not to teach fear of any type, or of anything.

The second is to educate in fearlessness. What a great strength, luminosity and light fearlessness

is! It is on the rock of fearlessness that the temple of religion is built.

But our so-called religions are exploiting fear, and so to date it has not been possible to build the

temple of religion. Can temples be built on the quicksand of fear? Even if they are, how long can

they last? When I go to temples, mosques and churches, I find that people trembling with fear have

gathered there. Their prayers are embodied forms of their fears, and the God in front of whom they

kneel down is the very projection of their fear. So man runs towards God during difficulties, because

he is more fearful at that time. In old age man runs towards God because his approaching death

makes him very fearful. Go to the temples and churches: you will find only such people who are

nearing death or who are as good as dead.

We do not want to teach fear. Fearlessness is to be taught, only then can religion be for alive people.

Atheism means the period of non-acceptance. If the society is against God and religion, then to

deny that too is atheism. Passing through non-acceptance of things widely accepted and believed

is atheism. For the maturity of the individual such a period is very valuable and beneficial. One

who does not pass through it remains immature forever. This passing through non-acceptance is

possible only if one has courage and fearlessness.

What is the greatest courage? Non-acceptance of false knowledge is the greatest courage.

If you do not know that ”God is,” do not just believe it. However much someone may pressure you,

allure you by promising heaven, or make you afraid by cursing you to go to hell, do not ever agree

to believe in what you do not know. Better to give up heaven or be ready to go to hell, but it is not

right to be fearful. Only one who has such courage is capable of discovering the truth. What can a

fearful mind do? It is ready to believe anything only because of its fear. In a theist society such a

mind becomes a theist. If he is in Soviet Russia he will become an atheist. He is just a dead limb of

the society, he is not a living individual, because life in an individual comes only out of fearlessness.

One man met me just yesterday. He said he believes in the immortality of the soul – and all over his

face, fear of death was written. I asked him if his belief was because of the fear of death, because

those who are afraid of death feel great solace in being told that the soul is immortal.

On hearing that, he became a little troubled and asked, ”Isn’t the soul immortal then?”

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I said, ”It is not a question of the mortality or immortality of the soul. The question is whether a

person who is afraid of death can ever know or search for the soul. Fearlessness is very necessary

in the search for truth.”

I want to say the same to you: A man believes in the immortality of the soul in the same proportion

as he is afraid of death. The belief is as strong as is the fear. Can such a man ever be ready to open

his eyes to the truths of life? The path to truth passes from nowhere else but fearlessness.

The immortality of the soul is not the belief of a fearful mind but a reality encountered by a totally

fearless consciousness.

A fearful mind does not seek the truth but seeks security. A fearful mind does not seek the truth

but seeks consolation. Then he catches hold of any belief that gives him security and consolation.

What security and consolation can concepts and beliefs provide? Except in truth there is no security,

contentment and peace. In order to realize truth, it is necessary that the mind have the courage to

give up false securities and consolations.

So I call courage the greatest religious virtue.

A teacher, a priest, was teaching some children about courage, and the children asked him to give

an example. The teacher said, ”Let us assume that twelve children were staying in one room in a

resthouse in the mountains. The night was very cold. When these children were going to bed after

a tiring day, eleven of them drew their blankets over themselves and slept. But there was one boy

who knelt down in one corner of the room to say his night prayer. I call this courage. Isn’t that boy

courageous?”

Just then one boy stood up and said, ”Let us assume that there are twelve priests staying in a

resthouse. If eleven priests kneel down in prayer before sleep, and if one priest draws his blanket

over himself and sleeps, is he not courageous?”

I do not know through what embarrassment that priest had to pass. I also do not know how he

escaped the predicament created by the children. But I definitely know one thing – that the ability to

be one’s own self is courage. The ability to be a man free from the crowd is courage.

To make a person his individual self is to give him courage. Confidence in one’s own self is courage.

Courage is self-confidence.

Along with courage, teach awareness. This is the second important element in education in religion.

If there is no awareness, mere courage can be dangerous, because instead of becoming selfconfidence

it can become insane ego. Courage is power, but awareness is the eye. One can

walk with courage but only with awareness can one see where one is going.

You may have heard the story of a blind man and a lame man. There was fire in a jungle, and the

blind man and the lame man had to save their lives. The blind man could run but could not see. In

a jungle that has caught fire, it is as good as inviting death if one who has no eyes begins to run.

The lame man could see but could not run. What is the value of eyes that have no legs? Then they

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thought of a way out and saved their lives. What was the method? Very simple. The blind man

carried the lame man on his shoulders.

This story is not of a blind man and a lame man – it is a story of courage and awareness. If one has

to save his life in a jungle of ignorance that is on fire, it is necessary to make awareness sit on the

shoulders of courage.

Ordinarily, a man lives unconsciously, as if in sleep. That sleep is of self-forgetfulness. That sleep

can be broken by becoming conscious and aware through self-remembrance. The children can

be educated in the direction of self-remembrance, right remembrance of one’s own self, and selfawareness.

The arrow of consciousness is ordinarily pointing outwards. We are aware only about whatsoever is

outside us; but that arrow of consciousness can be pointed towards one’s own self also. What we

experience then is our very being. Becoming aware of that is the happening which leads one from

the sleepy life of darkness to the awakened life of light.

The prayers, devotional songs and music going on in the name of religion do not bring any selfremembrance

in us, rather they bring self-forgetfulness. The happiness of such people is that of

unconsciousness and sleep. These are all mental intoxicants.

I call full consciousness and awareness the search for religion. A university can become a foundation

for, and provide an opportunity for, learning awareness. Awareness at the level of body, mind and

soul can be taught. Doing everything with awareness slowly fills one’s life with consciousness. The

endeavor to remain aware and be a witness to every mental activity has the capacity to make one’s

mind awake in an unprecedented way. At the same time, remaining aware each moment of what

one is becomes self-realization in the end.

The third step is silence.

Words, words and words fill one’s mind with too much tension and restlessness. Thinking, thinking

and thinking, the mind loses all its relaxedness. Silence means relaxation of the mind. It is by

knowing silence and living it that the mind always remains fresh and youthful. In total silence the

mind becomes a mirror in which truth reflects.

What can a restless mind know? What can it search? It is so involved in itself that it cannot look in

any other direction. Deep peace, total silence and the totally relaxed state of a thoughtless mind are

required for knowing the truth. Such a state of mind is meditation.

Children can be led into the direction of a restful mind. To leave the mind totally relaxed and free is

the fundamental rule for mind-rest. It is like floating in a river, not swimming; similarly, floating on the

waves of mind, not swimming at all, an effortless effort takes one into a deep peacefulness which is

not otherwise known to man.

Whatsoever meaning and joy is hidden within life, it all uncovers itself in such peacefulness.

Whatever is the truth of life is also attained. In fact, it was already the case but we were not aware

of it because of our restlessness, and in peace it is uncovered and comes face to face with you.

Knowledge is That Which Liberates

23 September 1968 pm in Birla Krida Kendra, Bombay, India

Sa Vidya Ya Vimuktaye. Knowledge is that which liberates.

This morning I would like to say a few things to you on this subject. This is a marvellous saying. It is

the most original definition of knowledge. This is the definition of knowledge as well as its criterion.

But perhaps you may not know the other side of the situation. We are not liberated. Whatsoever

we have learned cannot have been right knowledge, it must be false knowledge. Our life has not

known what liberation is, so the schools in which we have studied must not have been schools but

anti-schools, because the very test and definition of knowledge is that it helps us in our life to attain

the bliss of liberation.

What shall we call that knowledge which has not given that joy? In the whole world knowledge goes

on increasing, schools, colleges and universities go on increasing, but man does not seem to have

been liberated. Instead man goes on becoming more bound and conditioned and falling further

downwards.

Then could it be that we have made some fundamental mistake? Could it be that this increasing

knowledge is false knowledge? I would like to say to you that it is false knowledge. I have no doubt

about it. I am certain that what we are propounding as knowledge in the world is false knowledge,

because the soul of man does not seem to be becoming free through it, but instead it is enslaving

and imprisoning man. The consciousness of man does not become elevated by it but seems to be

falling down. The life force of man does not seem to be progressing towards divinity, but is falling

downwards towards animality.

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Can we call people educated this way really educated? With good intentions we are working

ceaselessly to spread this education. Good people are making great efforts to increase the numbers

of schools, colleges and hostels so that man becomes educated. But the experience of the last two

thousand years tells a different story.

On the one hand, knowledge increases; on the other, man seems to be deteriorating. On one

hand education increases; on the other the quality of life seems to be degenerating. On the one

side man’s intellect is developing; on the other side man’s soul seems to be falling apart. There

is something fundamentally wrong. Something from the very beginning has gone wrong with our

movement and direction, so in whatever direction we move it does not bring any bliss.

In the world today there is more learning, more education and more universities than during any

previous century, but there is also more misery, pain and lack of peace than in any previous century.

Man’s life is more ruined by the current education. With high hopes and good intentions we are

educating our children. We have our great dreams and desires for our children’s growth but in

educating them we find that they have fallen low. Before our very eyes we see this happening, yet

we increasingly go on creating the same type of education, colleges and hostels. It is difficult to

conceive that there can be anyone more blind and foolish than man. Man has not learned anything

from his past experiences, he has not learned any lessons.

I am reminded of a small event. Buddha had arrived in a town – there was a poor cobbler named

Sudas in that town. When Sudas got up in the morning, he saw in the lake behind his hut a lotus

flower in full bloom, unseasonally; this was not the season for the lotus to blossom. Sudas thought,

”If I take this flower to the market today, I am certain to find a customer who will buy it for one rupee.

It is an unseasonal flower – somebody will certainly buy it.” He plucked the flower and started off for

the market, thinking, ”I shall really be blessed if I get one rupee.”

While he was on the road he saw the chariot of the richest man of the town passing by. Seeing the

lotus, the rich man stopped the chariot and asked Sudas at what price he would sell. Sudas could

not quote the price he wanted – one rupee – but instead said it was unseasonal and that the rich

man might pay what he thought right. The rich man said, ”I am giving you five hundred gold coins –

do not sell it to anyone else.”

While the rich man was saying this, the commander-in-chief of the king pulled up on his horse and

stopped and addressed Sudas: ”I will purchase the flower for ten times the price the rich man is

offering.”

Sudas said, ”Have you people gone mad?” The rich man was paying five hundred gold coins and

the commander was ready to pay ten times that price! While he was saying this the chariot of the

king came and the king said, ”The flower is purchased by me, for ten times the price agreed to by

the commander.”

Sudas was surprised. What has happened to these people! He said, ”I was not expecting even one

rupee for this flower and you people are ready to pay such a high price? What is the reason?”

The king said, ”You are not aware: Buddha arrived in the town and we are going to receive him.

I myself would like to offer this unseasonal flower to Buddha, because he would not imagine that

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today someone could offer such a lotus flower at his feet! Who would not want to have such an

opportunity to offer a rare flower?”

Sudas said, ”In that case, there is no question of selling this flower; I myself shall offer the flower to

Buddha.”

The king tried to persuade him not to, saying, ”Have you gone mad, Sudas?” Up till now Sudas was

thinking that the rich man, the commander and the king had gone mad. Now all the three said,

”Sudas, don’t be mad! The poverty of your past and future generations will be destroyed by selling

the flower.”

Sudas said, ”The poverty of all my lives is destroyed now – I myself shall offer the flower.”

Sudas started walking towards the end of the town, where Buddha was expected to enter. The king,

the commander and the rich man all reached there far ahead of Sudas. They informed Buddha of

this most astonishing thing that had happened: ”Today the poorest cobbler of the town refused to

sell his lotus flower for any price. He wanted to offer it himself at your feet.”

Sudas came and offered the flower at the feet of Buddha, and Buddha asked him, ”Oh, mad Sudas,

why didn’t you sell the flower? It would have made life comfortable for your many future generations.”

Sudas replied, ”My lord, money cannot be higher than love. The soul cannot be sold for rupees. As

long as it was just a flower, I wanted to sell it. But the moment I thought of your feet, there was no

question of selling; I myself could offer it. Poor people too can love. Poor people too can respect.

Poor people too can trust. Poor people too have a soul. Please accept the flower!”

Buddha then addressed his disciples and said, ”Though Sudas is not literate, he is really learned,

educated. He does not know how to read and write, but still he is really learned.”

One of the disciples asked Buddha, ”What do you mean by ’really learned’?”

Buddha replied, ”Whosoever is aware of the higher values in life and who can give up lower values

for higher ones, is really learned. Sudas has rejected money for the sake of love.”

Can we call people of today ”really learned,” who reject love for money? Can we call people of today

educated whose whole education is destroying higher values and embracing lower values? Can we

call those learned who are always ready to give up the supreme for the petty, who are ready to sell

the soul for the body, who have no higher value than money, for whom there is no other journey in

life than reaching a position of power, and those in whose life and mind the meaningful receives less

attention than the meaningless?

Can such learning liberate? No, it cannot. We are making our children engineers, doctors,

mathematicians and chemists. But that is not education, that is only a means and method to earn

a livelihood; it is only an arrangement for earning in a better way. We are sending our children to

Europe and America for further education, and one may think one has done something very great

in doing so. But we are only teaching them to earn their bread more efficiently – nothing more than

that. We are not educating them nor establishing any connection with education, because education

means a birth of real and higher values in life.

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What will the birth of real and higher values in life mean? If there is such a birth, man will become

liberated, man will become full of bliss. The more life moves towards higher values, the more the

bonds go on falling.

What are the bonds? What are the shackles? They are of lower values.

What is liberation? A journey to the heights, going higher and higher, transcending oneself day after

day. A journey to loftier heights is real learning, knowledge. Do we teach transcendence of oneself?

No, we teach selfishness, exploitation, hoarding for one’s own self. We teach how to somehow fulfill

our desires and expectations more proficiently, and we think we are giving our children real learning.

Nothing can be more meaningless than this idea.

In one old seer’s school, three students were declared successful in their final examination.

However, their teacher was telling them every now and then that the last examination was still to

be taken. The last day of school arrived. They were given their degrees; the convocation ceremony

was over and their final examination was still not taken. The students kept quiet; perhaps the

teacher had forgotten. They packed their books, clothes and bedding, and went to their teacher in

the evening to receive his last blessings before departure and then left him.

On their way they were thinking of the last examination. It was late in the evening and they had

to reach the next village before nightfall. The road was rough and passed through a jungle; it was

getting dark and there were wild animals in the area. They saw a narrow path through a thicket

covered with lots of thorns.

One of the students jumped over the thorns. The second student went down the side road and

bypassed the thorns. The third student put down his belongings and slowly started collecting the

thorns and throwing them out of the way.

His friends told the third one, ”Are you mad? – darkness is descending, we have to reach the village

fast. There is no time to pick up the thorns. We have no time – come quickly!”

The third one replied, ”If it was daytime there would be no danger; whoever passed would see the

thorns. But after we pass by it will be so dark that the thorns will not be seen. If knowing this we

pass by without thinking about those who may follow, our education will be meaningless. I will clear

away the thorns – you can go on.”

Meanwhile, the seer who was hiding in the bush jumped out. He himself had put the thorns on the

path. It was their final examination. The seer said the other two students who had already crossed

the thorns should go back to the school – they had failed in the last examination. Only the third

student, who cleared away the thorns, cleared the final examination too.

One who has known how to remove the thorns in life is really educated, learned. One who would

clear the thorns for others will one day spread flowers on the road for them. But the one who sees

the thorns on the path and, ignoring them, passes by, is bound someday to spread thorns on others’

paths.

The last examination is always of love. Love is always the ultimate value. The supreme heights in

life are those of love. The Everest, the highest peak of life, is the peak of love.

Is our education teaching love? Our education is not even aware of love. Our education teaches

ego instead. Ego and love are two opposite values. Where there is ego, there is no love. Where

there is love, there is no ego. Current education teaches ego, and from the very childhood we make

all arrangements to sharpen the ego.

A child enters his elementary class and we ask him to come first. One who comes first is rewarded.

Those who come last are not rewarded and are ignored. If there are thirty students in a class, only

one of them can come first. The happiness of one boy is being based on the misery and frustration

of the remaining twenty-nine. This is the education we are providing.

One who has come first is happy and joyful, not because he came first but because he has left the

rest behind. We are teaching violence. Violence has only one meaning: it means nothing other

than experiencing happiness in others’ misery. One is not free of violence just by drinking germless

water or just by not eating food at night. The meaning of violence is just this: being happy in others’

misery.

And what else do we teach our children than to feel happy in others’ misery? If there is only one

student in a class, he will come first, but he will not be happy. But if there are thirty students in the

class and if he comes first, he will be happy for having left the twenty-nine behind. If there are three

thousand students and he comes first, his happiness is greater. If there are three lakh students, his

happiness and joy will know no bounds. In becoming a president of a country, leaving behind the

rest of the population of that country, one becomes very elated. That is why politics is violence –

because it is a race to come first.

Religion is just a different direction. Knowledge is just a different direction.

Jesus Christ says: Blessed are those who are able to come last.... It is strange. Either Jesus Christ

is mad or all of us are mad – us who run schools, impart knowledge and are teachers.... We are

teaching: Blessed are those who are capable of coming first.

The race for coming first cannot liberate anyone. There are some basic reasons for this. The first

thing is, one who joins that race remains in conflict and in tension; he has begun to fight. He is

creating enmities with others. One who creates enmity cannot remain free from it; he is bound to

it. Only he who is a friend to all can become liberated. And only he who is not in competition with

anybody can become a friend to all.

What else is the meaning of friendship except, ”I am not in competition.” What else is the meaning of

enmity except, ”I am in competition. Either you win or I win. These are the only alternatives: either I

or you, but both cannot win.”

We are teaching competition. From their very childhood, we add the poison of competition, violence

and ambition to the minds of children. And then we assume that these are schools. No, these are

anti-schools, centers of anti-learning. These institutions pervert the mind of man and make him

insane. Here inferiority is taught, and man then runs through his whole life like a madman. It makes

no difference then whether the race is for money, position or power; but we teach a race, the fever

of race. Fevers never make one healthy.

I have heard: Once, a dog living in Varanasi thought of going to Delhi. When so many people are

running to Delhi, it is not surprising that a dog also should get the idea of going to Delhi. Times

have changed. There was a time when people were going from Delhi to Varanasi ; now people from

Varanasi want to go to Delhi. The dogs of Varanasi decided to send their representative, their leader

to Delhi. They sent a message to the dogs of Delhi to receive him, to make his reservation in the

Circuit House there and to tell them that it would take a month for him to reach there by foot. The

dog must have been of the Indian mind, traveling like the sages of olden days, always on foot.

The dogs in Delhi were waiting to receive the leader. They were accustomed to receiving leaders

anyway; it was their daily routine. And now a leader from their own species was coming, so they had

planned a big reception. But it so happened that that dog reached Delhi in seven days. The dogs in

Delhi were very surprised. They had seen leaders coming, but never so fast that one reached Delhi

in seven days. Reaching Delhi takes a long time; by the time life is about to end people reach there.

That is why Delhi becomes their graveyard. But this dog reached there in seven days... smarter

than human beings!

He was asked, ”How come you reached here in seven days?”

The dog replied, ”Don’t ask. Our own friends, our own kinfolk have done this! Where the Varanasi

dogs saw me off, soon the dogs of the other village ran after me, chasing me. Where they left me

alone, at the borders of another village, the dogs of this third village began chasing me. I did not get

any time to rest and recoup anywhere, could not stop anywhere. I have come running non-stop to

Delhi!” While telling them this, he fell down and died. Whosoever runs non-stop enters death, not

life. But the dog completed his journey – he had the passion to run to Delhi and there were dogs all

around to make him run!

We are doing the same thing to our children: ”Go to Delhi!” All the people around you go on chasing

you; your parents chase you in childhood, and your wife when you are an adult. When you are old,

your children are after you, ”Go on! Go to Delhi! It is necessary to reach Delhi – there is no meaning

in life without that.”

This is the type of fever we create in the minds of children. This fever of ambition is so high that

the child runs like mad. This is what we call the speed of life. Can this speed liberate you? No, it

can lead you to death but not to liberation. Most of us only die in this process, we don’t become

liberated. The path of liberation is different.

Only that education will liberate which is free of ambition and which does not create any ambition.

But we think that if there is no ambition, how can a man make any progress?

The first important thing to remember is that just getting ahead has no value in itself. Another thing

to remember is that there are other ways of making progress: one way is getting ahead of others,

the other way is getting ahead of one’s own self. I should go further ahead than I was yesterday.

This is my competition with my own self, not with others. I should not remain where the last sunset

left me; when there is a new sunrise I should surpass myself, transcend my own self.

Such education can liberate. It teaches you the art of transcending your own self. The education

which teaches you the art of competition with others can never liberate.

It is important to understand that those who are waiting to leave others behind run all their life,

reaching nowhere, because there is always someone or other running ahead who has to be left

behind. But if one is busy in transcending one’s own self, one day he reaches where nothing remains

to be transcended. Mahavira reaches there, Buddha reaches there, Christ and Krishna reach there.

There one reaches the supreme state of transcending one’s own self. The name of this supreme

state is the experience of godhood, the supreme experience, liberation, beyond which there is no

further movement or reaching.

Where is that ultimate goal? The name of that ultimate goal is liberation, moksha. When a

person transcends himself in every respect, nothing remains to be transcended, then liberation

happens. But those who remain busy in getting ahead of others never reach the ultimate point in

transcendence. Why? Because ”the others” are many. It is neither easy nor possible to be ahead

of everyone – no man has been able to do that so far. There are a few mysteries, because of which

nobody has ever been able to do that. Have you heard of anybody who would have claimed that

he is first, that nobody is ahead of him? No Napoleon, no Sikandar, no Nehru, can dare to say that

there is nobody ahead of him. Nobody can dare to say that.

There was a scientist named Peare who was experimenting on some insects called dung beetles.

These insects are wonderful – they always follow their leader. As long as the leader continues to

crawl along, the others also continue to do so; none stop. They too have this human habit. Several

types of insects suffer from many of the human diseases – like following the leader.

Peare took a round plate and put ten or fifteen insects on it. The insects started going round and

round it with their leader. The plate was round, so the path was never ending. Until the insect leader

stopped, the other insects could not stop – and when the followers are continuing to crawl after him,

how can the leader stop? It will be embarrassing for him. So the leader keeps going, all the other

insects keep going. Alexanders and Napoleons carry on, the followers carry on. If the leader stops,

the other insects will call him unsuccessful, making it necessary to choose another leader. If the

follower insects stop, the leader calls them cowards!

In the end, the insects started dying of exhaustion, one after the other. They could not understand

that there was no end to their journey, because the journey was going round and round.

If we look at man carefully, no one has reached to the end of this journey ever. This only shows that

our journey is also going on on some circular path, round and round and round. Still there is always

someone ahead of us and someone behind us. That time never comes when one is ahead of all, or

is behind all – and thus the journey continues till one tires and dies. Not only those insects of Peare

but man too dies because of a similar exhaustion of a circular journey. The other travelers move you

out of the way and continue their journey. But no one looks at the fallen ones closely, to see if he

is also traveling to a similar end. Up until today, no man has ever been successful in the journey of

competition. He will never be. That journey has no end to it – it goes on in circles.

But there is another journey of transcending one’s own self, always rising higher and beyond one’s

own self. It has no relationship with anyone else. I call education that which does not teach getting

ahead of others, but teaches to go ahead of and transcend one’s own self. The day a man is initiated

in learning to transcend his own self, completely new doors of happiness open before him, hitherto

unknown to him. On the other hand, for the man who is initiated in learning to get ahead of others,

new ways to misery, tension, pain and restlessness go on appearing in his life.

Remember it well: to force the other behind is to give the other pain. And one who causes pain to

others can never attain to bliss, because whatsoever we give to others, that is what comes back to

us. Life is wonderful in the sense that we hear the echoes of everything that we give to it.

I had once gone to the hills, to where there was an echo point. Whatsoever noise was created there,

it used to echo back and forth seven times. One friend created the sound of a barking dog which

multiplied seven times and came back, causing the hills to echo with the sound of several barking

dogs. It was very disturbing. I asked that friend if it would not be better instead to sing a song. If he

did not want to sing, he could create the sound of a cuckoo; it is not necessary to bark like a dog.

The friend then sang a song which filled the hills all around with the lovely, echoing, song.

I told my friend that the whole of life is like an echo point which returns abuses if abuses are spoken,

and returns a song if a song is sung. It returns thorns if thorns are thrown, returns flowers if flowers

are showered.

Life is a great center of echoes. Whatsoever we do comes back to us. If we are teaching how to

make others unhappy, sad or defeated, it will all come back to us, and it will be the only wealth

with us at the end of our life. How can such wealth bring liberation nearer? It will bring only hell,

unhappiness, pain and bondage nearer.

It is surprising that if we spread thorns on someone’s path, this act is burdensome, but if we spread

flowers it is not a burdensome act. Burdensome means, when the thorns return to us they bring

misery and pain, but when flowers come back, there is no cause for misery and pain.

Blavatsky traveled all over the world. She had a strange habit: she would carry a handbag in which

she kept flower seeds; and wherever she went, whether by train or by car, she was throwing the

seeds out on either side. People asked her why she was doing this. She said, ”It is time for the rainy

season; the water will fall on the seeds and they will sprout and grow into plants. Flowers will come.

It will be very beautiful.”

People said that even if the flowers blossomed, what did it matter to her? – she was not going to

pass along the same road again. She said, ”I see flowers all around which have grown from seeds

thrown by others and I am delighted. I owe a debt to those who sowed those seeds. By throwing

these seeds I am paying back the debt. I imagine that others who pass by this road some time will

be delighted, even though I may not pass here again. Even in my imagination I feel delighted at that

happy prospect and I feel overwhelmed.”

What liberates ultimately is education. What leads a man nearer to his soul, nearer to the truth,

is education. And who will help you in this? The other? No, nobody else can do this for you.

Each day you have to purify your inner gold in fire and let the impurities burn so only the pure

gold remains. One has to rise above one’s own self continuously. The education that teaches this

process becomes liberating.

I have told you a few things. I will tell you one more thing and complete my talk. Whatsoever

misery, darkness, hatred and violence are born in this world of man are due to understanding false

knowledge to be knowledge. If we really want to transform the life of man, a clear distinction between

false knowledge and real knowledge will have to be made. Whatsoever teaches the means and

methods of earning a livelihood is false knowledge. Whatsoever teaches life – not livelihood but life

– is knowledge.

So we should have false schools as well as real schools. False schools should be those where one

can learn methods of earning a livelihood – because without bread man cannot live. But by bread

alone man cannot live either. As it is now, we are calling false schools, real schools. Not only that,

we even associate such beautiful people’s names with them, such as that of Mahavira. We name

a school, ”Mahavira Vidyalaya”; Mahavira School. So far there is not a single school on the earth

worthy to be named after people like Mahavira. That will take time. Right now all schools are those

of ordinary men; not one school of Mahavira is here. But it can be so; if we work, it can be so.

I pray to God, and to you, that some day there can be schools of Mahavira, of Buddha, of Christ –

of those who knew, of those who lived life and attained to Life.

Fire of Rebellion

Could it be that the real reason for the non-ending of India’s existence is that it has long before

ceased? Now nothing has remained with us to end! I begin my talk with this news.

This country has died thousands of years ago. It is necessary for this country to search for a new

life, a new soul. Certainly the teacher could have been of help in the search, but so far he has

not been. Up till now the teacher has not proved to be the torch-bearer of our life. Up till now he

has remained the agent of the old dead society. The teacher has remained the instrument and the

medium for pouring into the mind of the new generation the customs of the old, dead, rotten society

of the past.

The teacher can become the medium and the instrument for the birth of a new world, a new life and

a new man, but he has not become so far. Let us understand this truth about the teacher first.

Till today what has been the work of a teacher? What work has the society taken from the teacher?

Society says that we are taking the work of teaching and educating our children from the teacher.

But on looking deeply it is found that the society also takes the work of passing on all the old

diseases, blind beliefs and false knowledge into the minds of new generations, through the teacher.

The society does not tolerate a teacher who is revolutionary, because the day the teachers become

revolutionary a new society will be born. The teachers becoming revolutionaries can become the

basic cause for the change of the whole society. That is why an attempt has always been made not

to allow the teacher to become a reactionary and retrogressive. He is given a lot of respect, it is

true, but society gives that respect to the teacher only while no ray of rebellion is seen in him. If a

ray of rebellion is seen in him, the society begins to be strangle his throat.

You may be surprised to know that from the world of teachers, no revolutionary thoughts, no

new vision, no new views have ever arisen. The society has always tried to keep the teacher

from becoming a revolutionary because it is one of the largest and the most powerful groups of

people, and in its hands are the minds and souls of the new generation. If the teacher becomes a

revolutionary it will cause a break between the old and the new society, because it is the teacher

who hands over the old society into the hands of new society. The teacher is the middle link through

which the past enters into the future. The teacher can do a lot, but perhaps he does not even have

any such idea as being the forerunner of a revolution.

Up till now the teacher has put all his energies only into adjusting the mind of the new generation

to that of the old generations. He has tried to implant the beliefs and attitudes of the old society

into the minds of the new generation so that those old ideas reach into the bloodstream of the new

generation. The old society respects and honors the teacher just because he is the basis for saving

the past. The day the teacher would be rebellious, a new society can be born every day, and the

new generation can raise its eyes towards a new life.

But the teacher is not rebellious. In my view, a teacher who is not rebellious is not a teacher at all,

and he loses the right to be a teacher. How can a teacher be a teacher who is not rebellious? Without

being rebellious, the eyes do not open in the direction of knowledge. Without being rebellious, the

soul of man does not come out of its shell. Without being rebellious, one cannot remain in step with

life.

The life of the Indian society has become like that of a pond, not that of a river. In one way the life of

a pond is very secure: nowhere to go, no problems of the road, no straying away on unknown paths;

no crossing of the hills, no dreams of the unknown ocean about which there can be no certainty to

reach. The life of the pond has its own happiness, having a well-enclosed, carefree, fixed space.

India is enjoying the happiness of the pond, not facing the struggle of a river. We have become

so accustomed to this happiness that for thousands of years we have stopped taking any risks.

Remember, the society which ceases to take risks, will slowly diminish the lighted flame of its life.

The inner flame remains powerful only in facing risks.

Nietzsche kept a signboard on his table. Only two words were written on it. Whenever anyone asked

him what was the essence of his life, he would point out to that signboard on which was written ”Live

dangerously.” The reality is that it is in living dangerously that life is felt. Living a protected life, one

never experiences life. That is why those who live in graves live very safe. There is no danger. The

life of a pond is a life of avoiding all dangers, but it stinks, becomes dirty and dries up.

India has been living a secured life for centuries; has created its own cocoon and lives within it. We

do not want to enter the expanses of this world and we do not want to travel to the moon and stars.

We are bound to our homes. We are more like trees whose roots are bound to the land, than like

man. We do not move from our places. Every son takes over his father’s place, generation after

generation. Repetition continues. Men continue to change, but the society remains the same.

If a man who lived a thousand years ago came to a village in India today, he would not find any

difference; everything is the same as it was in his own time. We feel very happy about this, and we

say, our leaders say, ”Rome has died, the Greece and Egypt of old have died. Where is Assyria and

where is Babylon? But we are still here.” We respect our static situation greatly. It is not something

to be respected, it is very insulting. This staticness clearly tells that we have become incapable of

any change. We have lost that capacity for change. We are like a stone lying near a roseflower.

The roseflower blossoms in the morning, dances in the light of the sun, tries to rise towards the sky,

withers by the evening and falls down. But the stone that was lying nearby in the morning is lying

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the same in the evening as it was in the morning. The stone must be thinking to itself, ”Look! the

flower withered away, but I am the same as I was earlier. Many flowers have come and are gone, but

I remain.” The stone must be admiring itself, but the stone does not know the joy of being a flower.

The stone does not know the thrill of change. It does not know that living, flowering, withering and

falling to the ground has its own meaning and mystery. The stone does not know that only those

wither who flower; only those fall who rise. It also does not know that only those die who live. If

you want to avoid dying, avoid living. If you want to avoid falling, never rise up. If you are afraid of

withering, do not ever blossom. But what does the poor stone know?

I have heard: One morning in a garden, a strange event happened. There were small grass flowers

that had grown, well protected by the protruding stones of a stone wall. Sheltered by the wall, those

flowers never knew storms nor the light of the sun. They were living a sheltered life, not knowing the

rains, nor the stars that twinkled in the night, but they were very safe, there was no danger for them.

One of the grass flowers lost his head and one day peeped out. He saw a roseflower rising upwards

towards the sky. A desire arose in that grass flower, ”Can I not be a roseflower? Cannot I rise

upwards?” In the night he prayed to God to make him a roseflower. God told him that he should not

be mad, that he was so well-protected, that the roseflower blossoms in the morning and withers in

the evening and falls, whereas when he blossoms he lives on for weeks on end, he does not wither

easily.

The grass flower replied, ”That I understood. We stay blossoming because we don’t really blossom

in the first place. And the grass flower is not so juicy from the very beginning, so we don’t wither

away easily. No, I want to blossom like a roseflower, I want to have velvety petals like the roseflower.

I do not want to live under the shadow of this stone wall, I want to rise up in the open sky – even for

a moment, but I want to rise.”

The grass flower was adamant. The neighboring grass flowers also tried to persuade it, saying,

”Have you gone mad? Such a thing has never been done in our family and tradition. This is an old

custom, we just live here, buried in the stones. Even our forefathers never thought of going out in

the open sky, nor did their forefathers. It is not written in our scriptures. What madness! It seems

you have gone crazy! You are spoiled by the company of others. Remain within your limits. It is

dangerous to step out of this place. You will die. Don’t you see how much trouble roseflowers have

to endure? The day before there was a storm and all the roseflowers were lying flat on the ground.

One day when it was raining, all the rose petals were found weeping. If there are high-speed winds,

the rosebush gets shaken to its very roots. We remain safe and happy.

The grass flower, however, did not agree. It said, ”No, even for a day, but I want to be a roseflower.”

And when one does not agree, what can God do? God can do something only when one agrees. If

you don’t agree, he is helpless. So in the morning the grass flower became the roseflower. Soon the

sun rose, the clouds gathered in the sky, and a strong wind began to blow. All those grass flowers

began to shout at the new roseflower from below: ”Oh you crazy flower! Now you will die! For a

moment’s happiness you lost your permanent comfort. Just for a moment, just to be a roseflower,

you gave up your safety!”

Soon after, thundering rains came with very strong winds. The thin stems of the roseflower started

moving this way and that, and the rose petals began to fall. Even the leaves fell off. After some

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time the roots of the rosebush, wet and weak, became uprooted and it fell over. While it was dying,

a grass flower bent down and said, ”You fool! Now have you come to your senses or not? For the

sake of a moment’s experience under the sky, how much didn’t you suffer!”

The dying roseflower replied, ”Friends, what I have known during these few moments, I never knew

during a long life under the shadow of the stones. Rising for a moment towards the sky, struggling

against the storm... maybe for a moment, but to stand facing the sun under an open sky! That

struggle with the storm with my delicate branches! A few moments of blossoming – but really

blossoming! The joy I experienced, the juice I felt – I am full of gratitude to God! And shame on you

that you will never know what life is and what it means to struggle and live during a storm! You will

live behind your safety wall and die there. Your life is unlived.”

I don’t know if this really happened or not, but it seems in the life of the people of India this has

happened. We are living under the shadow of security. We have become so fond of security that

any courage to move in dangers is absolutely destroyed. And then of course, whatever is old feels

familiar and safe. Unfamiliar feels unsafe, unknown frightens. Unfamiliar paths create fear in us. So

we have made a path and like a drudge we go round and round over it for thousands of years. Our

teachers also initiate the new generation into the same old path on which our forefathers used to

move.

No, that way the new India cannot take birth. The teachers of India will have to courageously take

steps to break this situation and raise the consciousness of the people. Certainly there are dangers

in dealing with the unknown, but why be afraid of danger? It is better to face the danger of the

unknown rather than be secure with what is known, because in dealing with the unknown there is

an interest in life; there arises energy to live and there is a challenge in life.

If the teachers of India decide to free the new generation from moving on the old fixed paths, it is

possible for the soul of India to be born – otherwise not. They should decide to encourage the new

generation to take up challenges and cut new paths, climb the mountains and cross the oceans and

go into space. But we are in the habit of preventing children even from going into darkness, telling

them that the night has come. We prevent them from jumping into the river which is flooded, from

jumping into the sea. We say, ”Where is the necessity to climb Everest?” Everest is the highest crest

of the Indian Himalayas, which since the past one hundred years people from the West have been

trying to climb. Many have died in the attempt, and we are laughing at them, sitting secure in our

caves. We tell them, ”Why do you climb? Are you mad? What is there on top except ice?”

We, however, do not know that the children of those communities that are prevented from climbing

the hills, the very soul of those communities is prevented from rising to new heights, and it prevents

their souls also from rising.

Thousands of children climb the Alps. Every year during their holidays many of them die in their

attempt to climb the Alps. But knowing this full well, their parents and teachers do not stop them,

just giving them the statistics of deaths last year. Where there is youth, there will be enterprise and

climbing.

Hundreds of boys and girls cross the English Channel, whereas we have lost the courage to cross

even a small rivulet. First we try to find how deep it is, whether our forefathers have ever crossed it

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or not. If our ancestors never crossed it, we are not going to do that because we only follow in their

footprints. We cannot take any initiative. Why put our easy life in danger? Our personalities are so

fearful that we cling to the corpses. There is no way the new can be born. If we get rid of the old,

only then the new is born.

The most important task the teacher has to do is to make India free from its clinging to the old. The

teacher should know that he is guilty if he ever tries to create infatuation for the old in children. He

has to prepare the children for inviting the new, for being aware of the new, for embracing the new.

Prepare the children to be attracted by the unknown and to listen to the call of the unknown.

American children are thinking of living on the moon, but Indian children do not do anything more

than watch the drama of ”Ramleela.” Rama was beautiful and Ramleela is also beautiful, but how

long will we continue to watch it? Even Rama would be feeling very much harassed by now as

to, ”Why are these people after me year after year to enact the same drama?” There will be other

Ramas in the future, don’t we need to care about that? Many other Ramleelas are going to be

played, not only on this earth but on the moon and Mars, and other stars as well.

But for us everything has happened in the past. Nothing is to happen in future – all our work is over.

The god of history has closed the doors and gone ahead. Now there is no more history. Now only

one work remains to be done and that is to ruminate over past history. Just as the buffaloes go on

ruminating while sitting chewing grass, we also go on ruminating over past history. Don’t we have to

create anything new, don’t we have to give birth to the future, and don’t we have to be anything new?

Don’t we have some dreams in our heart to create a new tomorrow? And don’t we want to create

some place where none of our forefathers has even set foot? What is the purpose and meaning of

our life if we only have to walk in the footsteps of our forefathers?

We have to decide to walk on the paths where our forefathers never set foot. We will see such visions

which our forefathers never saw, we will undertake voyages which have never been undertaken, we

will walk on virgin lands where so far nobody has ever walked.

But no, our very aspirations have died. We go on looking for the old trodden paths and continue to

walk on them. Hence, in India the new is not taking birth. If the new is not born, life becomes sad.

Life has become sad. Every man is sad, tired and defeated. Every man is praying to God for only

one thing: to make him free from the chain of rebirth. Somehow one wants to get rid of this life:

where is liberation? Every living man goes on asking where is salvation, where is emancipation?

We have made life so wretched that except for praying to get rid of it, nothing else seems relevant.

The whole country has become very sad. It is bound to be sad. By staying in the old for long, the

mind becomes sad. When a calendar is hanging in our house, we tear off the past date every day.

Likewise, every day the old must be discarded so that the new that is hidden behind can appear. In

the mind of India, a new date never appears. The calendar is thousands of years old. There are so

many old dates in it that the new dates cannot be found, not even with great effort. We have never

thrown away the old calendar. We have to do that, so that new dates can be seen.

When we see the birth of the new, our soul dances with joy to welcome the new. A life of dance

and cheer spreads all over, because there is great interest in knowing the unknown. The familiar

becomes known, no interest remains for it. India has become interestless and hence it has died.

Interest is a characteristic of life.

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If we want India to revive, the teacher has to do a most important work. Perhaps there is no other

more important work than this, and nobody else can do it either. No other section of the society can

bring about this revolution. It is the teacher who has to be clear in his mind not to allow new children

to be dominated by the old. Before that can happen, sow new seeds in them. Before their mind

starts being burdened with the old, make them listen to the music of the new. Before their minds

become dulled by old tunes, let the tunes of new songs reach them, so that they are stirred up and

engaged in the search for the new.

It is necessary to save the children of India from their parents. It may sound peculiar but it is so.

Who will do this? Parents go on casting their children in their own image. Till they complete this job

they do not die. When the parents feel that their son has now reached the same development as

they had, the parents pass on. Every generation is doing this. The old molds are ready for casting;

every new child is being cast into the old molds. Who will prevent this? Who will protect children

from their parents? If this is not done, this country cannot take a new birth.

The teacher can save the children from parents. But the teacher is not aware, the teacher is not

conscious. He has become the agent of parents, he is working for them. Parents give him a salary

so that he can cooperate in molding the children as they like. That is why this has become a vicious

circle. How to break it? Someone should take the courage to do it. Difficulties will be there, because

the society does not respect such a person, but somebody will have to bear the consequences;

otherwise this country cannot take birth.

Excepting the teacher, I do not see anyone else fit for the job. It is wrong to expect this from

politicians; it is wrong to expect anything from them. For politicians, if good days arrive, mental

treatment will have to be arranged; that much is alright, but nothing else can be expected from

them. If the politicians from all the capital cities are arrested and they are sent away for treatment,

the world will be different. But it is very unlikely that something can happen through them. Perhaps if

people from the planet Mars arrive, something can be done. But there is no hope from our politicians,

because they are the agents of all our diseases and they are exploiting our diseases. They have

made our weaknesses stepping stones to climb into positions of power. Nothing good is to be

expected from them. For them our weaknesses are their ladders, our diseases are their paths, and

our ignorance, blind beliefs and foolishnesses are their stepping stones.

Who else can help then? Sadhus and sannyasins? No. Once upon a time they were revolutionaries.

That time is gone. Now sadhu-sannyasins are not revolutionaries. Once there was a time there were

people like Buddha, Mahavira, Christ and Shankara. Those days are gone. Now sadhu-sannyasins

are servants of the society. The society gives them meals and they go on praising the society. Their

condition is no better than this. Nothing can be expected of them.

There is only one class of people which has not yet bothered to do anything. That is the educated

class of teachers. It is quite a big class and has immense power. Its greatest power is that the new

generation is in its hands. Before the new generation changes for the worse, the teachers can give

a new direction, new awareness to the new generation. There is a tremendous power in their hands

about which they are not aware. If the new principles of transforming life are brought to the minds

of the students, the whole country can be transformed within twenty years, because in twenty years

the old generation makes way for the new generation to come. The accumulated filth of thousands

of years can be removed just within twenty years. But this can only be done by the teacher and no

one else.

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So first the teacher should become aware that he is committing a crime if he is communicating the

old diseases into the new generations. Old generations were afflicted by Hindu-Muslim labels. If a

teacher is teaching the children under his guidance that ”You are a Hindu,” or ”You are a Muslim,”

he is committing a great offence. He must teach the new generation that ”You are all human beings,

not Muslims and not Hindus.” Then a new country will be born. If the old generation teaches that

”You are a brahmin,” or ”You are a sudra,” and if the teacher also confirms it, then he is the agent of

the old generation. He will then continue the diseases, he cannot stop them.

It is enough to be a human being. If the new generation can understand this, the diseases of

thousands of years can be destroyed within twenty years. Nothing can prevent this change. But the

teacher is not aware and conscious about what he is doing.

We are infatuated with the old. The children should give up this infatuation with the old. In fact

children are not interested in the old, they are very keen to know new things, but we are forcibly

making them accept the old. Every day they must be taught the new. Courage, enterprise, risktaking

is the one virtue which, if it is inculcated into the minds of the future generations of India by

the teachers – the work will be over.

But in the structure that is devised so far, the child becomes impotent because he is confused; he

does not know what to do. The teacher does not know what to do and what not to do. The people

in the society who are supposed to think of the subject also do not know what to do. There is

restlessness, but no clear path is visible. It has to be properly thought out, what can be done, what

is possible.

I feel that we have a golden opportunity in our hands today, because there is more rebellious spirit

in the minds of Indian children than any time before in the history so far. If the teacher can give

proper direction to these rebellious children, the old rubbish can be put to the fire. From this energy

of rebellion the new can take birth.

But the teacher is unable to understand even the potential of this rebellion that is born in children.

He is not able to utilize this potential energy. In fact the teacher himself is afraid of it and he is trying

to destroy this rebellion of the children from all sides. He does not know that he is committing a

mistake.

The rebellion of the children is not to be destroyed, but it has to be given the right direction. This

spirit of rebellion that has come in them, the soul that is born – which at present is throwing stones,

breaking windows and chairs – this wonderful capacity to destroy that has arisen in them, can be

directed to some worthy destruction. If we do not direct this energy properly, their anger will be

wasted on destroying the wrong things. Breaking chairs and windows won’t help in any way, but this

courage to break chairs is welcome. With that courage the Hindu-Muslim fanaticism can be broken,

the brahmin-sudra stupidity can be stopped, the foolish walls created between man and woman can

be removed. The rotten morality can be exposed and a new, more healthy, more scientific morality

can be given birth.

The capacity to break has arrived – but the teacher is afraid of it. He thinks that this ability to destroy

is bad. Furniture is being broken, windows are being broken – but I say to you that the children do

not know what to break, that is why they are breaking chairs. If the teacher explains to them what

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is to be broken, then they will never break chairs; they will start breaking what needs to be broken.

But the teacher is afraid. He says, ”Do not break anything. Be disciplined.”

However, you do not know that it is a great thing to break discipline. Discipline has a value,

indiscipline has a value too. Discipline is valuable to maintain the society as it is. But when the

society is to be changed, discipline is of no use, indiscipline becomes valuable. This is the time for

change.

Utilize the indiscipline that is there in children. Whatsoever is rotten can be destroyed with the help of

these children. What has become a great burden like rock on the life of man should be changed. The

teacher can do it because he is very near and intimate to them. But he too is unable to understand

the children and does not know what is happening.

It is a good sign that this rebellious spirit is aroused in children. If the teacher can become aware

of his revolutionary role and can understand that the burning torch of revolution is in his hands,

perhaps these children will love their teacher as they have never loved before. The teacher then will

be a collaborator in making a golden future for the children as he never was before.

I have put before the teacher friends these few questions. What I am saying does not necessarily

have to be right; it may all be wrong, so it is not necessary for you to believe it. But please think and

meditate on whatsoever I have said.

It is necessary to give birth to a dialogue in the whole country, that the teachers begin to think, and

they talk to the children, they try to understand them and then come to some decisions. Then I am

very hopeful. A lot can be done. The situation is ripe, the opportunity is waiting, the whole climate

is there; it is a God given opportunity and it is in our hands to utilize this great energy of transition.

Or, would you rather just sit back and watch what is going on and condemn it as bad and not do

anything? Would you rather be a spectator? Would you prove to be only a spectator in the life of the

coming society? Then every day you will go to school and while you teach the children that two plus

two is four, or teach them the ABC’s, the politicians will go on preparing atom bombs. While you

teach them arithmetic and the geography of the earth, the politicians will continue the preparations

for destroying the very earth itself.

No, this cannot be tolerated any more. Teach that two plus two makes four – but that is not the only

work of a teacher. He should become the creator of a revolution too, then only does he become a

teacher. He has to remain awake to everything that is happening around life. He has to be conscious

of the new sprouts that have shot forth in children. He also has to be concerned about his own role

in life.

India has good teachers, but they are asleep. India has a very intelligent group of teachers, but they

are not revolutionary. India has a long line of sincere teachers and teachers full of morality, but their

sincerity and morality is retrogressive and reactionary. He is not a revolutionary and that is why he

is watching helplessly. He feels there is nothing in his hands; he has only remained an instrument

of the society.

In the whole world, India included, the politicians have cut off the teachers from the lifestream.

Politicians tell the teachers that they should not worry about the quality of life and about politics;

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they must do their work within the four walls of the school. The politician is very clever. He knows

that if the teacher starts actively thinking about life, he has so much power in his hands that he

will transform the whole society. So, cleverly and cunningly he has kept the teacher away from and

separate from life as a whole.

The politicians have persuaded the teachers to feel that they are not concerned with life as such,

that their great work is to teach the children that two plus two makes four and show them on the

map where Timbuktu is, unmindful of whether Timbuktu actually exists! Now the possibility of saving

humanity is becoming less and less, and if the teacher continues to watch silently this situation, I am

not prepared to call him a teacher. The teacher has a great responsibility. The teacher is a midwife

for the new generation.

Socrates has defined the teacher as one who works as a midwife in giving birth to the new soul.

Socrates has said it rightly. He was one of the most wonderful teachers of the world. He has rightly

said that the teacher has to work just like a midwife and assist in giving birth to a new soul. If you

are not becoming, we are not becoming that midwife, we have no right to call ourselves teachers.

I have made a few humble suggestions here. I am grateful for your having heard me so silently and

peacefully. Finally, I salute the divine residing within all of you. Accept my salutations.

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CHAPTER 7

Total Education

21 January 1968 am in Poddar College

This discourse was given to teachers at Poddar College.

Of the misfortunes that have befallen mankind, the greatest are the ones which we have been

regarding as blessings. Because of regarding them as benedictions, as blessings, it has not been

possible to avoid those misfortunes, or to change them, and nothing has been done to be free of

them; rather, on the contrary, we have been watering them at their roots. As a result, born out of this

is the man who is in front of us, and created out of it is the society which is all around us.

What has been going on in the name of education I consider the greatest of all those misfortunes.

Certainly you will be surprised to hear this, because education is thought to be a blessing. But are

you aware that education has not given man balance and health? On the contrary, it has taken away

all the balance from human life. And it was bound to be so, because there are some basic mistakes

in what we have so far been thinking education to be.

The first basic mistake is that we have taken man to be only intellect. There can be nothing more

false and wrong than this. Man is not intellect alone and the education being given is only of the

intellect. The rest of the man remains untouched and incomplete; the rest of the man remains

undeveloped, only the intellect develops. It is just as if someone’s whole body shrinks and wastes,

only his head goes on becoming bigger. That man will be only an ugliness, and that man will be

unable to walk. It will be difficult for him to live, because his big head will not be in balance with the

rest of his body. And this is exactly what has happened in the name of education.

We decided that man is only intellect, and then for the past three thousand years we have been

doing everything only to develop man’s intellect. The intellect has developed but the rest of the man

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is left far behind; the rest of the man is left three thousand years behind, and his intellect has gone

three thousand years ahead. The tension, the gap that is created between the two is what is killing

us. This has given birth to an inverted crippledness.

A man has all parts of his body intact and only his eyes are missing; then we say one part of his

body is crippled, undeveloped. If a man has all his parts but his two legs, we call him crippled. An

opposite type of crippledness is also possible of which we are not aware – a man having only two

legs and nothing else. This man is an inverted cripple.

Education has not made man healthy, it has crippled him. Only his intellect has developed and all

the remaining parts of his body have remained undeveloped. The intellect has become bigger and

bigger, and his connection with all the sources of life have been cut off.

What do we teach? What do we give in the name of education? Do we offer any education of life?

Do we give any education in living? Do we teach the art of life? Not at all. We teach some words; we

teach some mathematics, some language, some chemistry or physics, some history or geography.

But what do we really teach through all this teaching? Just some words.

Words are not life. Words have their utility in living life, but mere education of words is not the

education of life. Then what happens is that there is a great pile of words.... An educated man ends

up having no other wealth than that of words. He is as idiotic as any uneducated person. There is

only one difference between them, and that is that in addition the educated man falls into the illusion

that he is not an idiot. He remains just as ignorant about all other dimensions of life as any tribal man

from the jungles. He has no understanding whatsoever about the art of living, he has no idea of the

paths along which to live life. He has no acquaintance with life at all. What do libraries and books

have to do with life? There is no need to commit the mistake of thinking that one who is familiar with

a classroom is familiar with life. And it is necessary to keep in mind that life may not even give a clay

medal to one who has won a gold medal in the university.

The education of words, mere accumulation of words, mere wealth of words, certainly becomes a

weight on the brain but neither does it make the brain free, nor alive, nor thoughtful, nor does it

provide any originality in looking at life, nor does it give the art of living or teach ways of living. So

far, this is what we have been calling education! The sick, insane and ill man we see today is the

result of this education.

Do you know that as his education grows, man goes on becoming more perverted? The uneducated

man had a kind of balance and health which is missing in the educated man. The aboriginals of the

forests had a kind of beauty, a kind of music, a bliss. There was a meaning and purpose in their life

which is missing in the educated man.

It is really amazing. Are we becoming educated at the cost of losing bliss? Is our capability and

fitness to experience bliss declining? Are we breaking contact with the roots of our life? If we look at

the educated man with unbiased eyes – which is difficult because we are also educated men, so it

is with great difficulty that we are able to see an educated man’s diseases. Where there is the same

disease prevalent all over the place, it is very difficult to recognize it.

We are all educated, not only educated but we are also the educators; we are the people who spread

and impart that same education. It will be very difficult for us to see... very difficult for us to think that

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what we are spreading is not making man healthy. But those who have eyes and those who have

not lost their entire intelligence in going through this education – those people may be able to see a

few things.

America is the most educated country, but the largest number of mad people is also in America. Is

there some relationship between the two, or is it just accidental? The countries which are becoming

more and more educated, the mental tension of their people is growing in the same proportions.

Are we aware of these statistics or not? The more educated a country becomes, the more cases of

suicide it has. In America itself, every day some 1.5 to 3 million people seek treatment for mental

ailments. These are government statistics, and we know well that government statistics are never

correct. If 1.5 to 3 million people are seeking mental treatment every day, then we know that it is not

because of some individual difficulty, rather some collective disease is entering man’s mind.

In New York thirty percent of people cannot sleep at night without taking sleeping pills. And the

scientific investigations and researches there say that within fifty years not a single man there will

be able to sleep without taking sleeping pills. Are these the symptoms of a progressing man? And

what to say about New York – even Bombay will not stay behind for too long. We are also standing

shoulder to shoulder in this progress, in this race; India will not stay behind. India, which has been

the world teacher in every field, will not stop before becoming the world teacher in madness as well.

We cannot avoid it; we are moving fast in this direction. Our leaders are making every effort so that

we are not left behind.

The black shadow of mental tension and restlessness that has descended on the West – what is the

reason for its birth? The people who have tried to make the West educated during the past three

hundred years, they are the good people with good intentions whose hands are behind it. Perhaps

they did not know about the total nature of life; perhaps they had the notion that man will become

happy if his intellect alone can be developed. Certainly intellectuality should grow, intellect should

grow, but in proportion to all the limbs of life, in a balance. It should grow hand in hand with health,

with heart, with being. If it grows alone, it is bound to create danger.

Intellect has no heart. The life, the world created by intellect will also be heartless. Intellect has

mathematics, not love. Intellect has calculations and statistics, not feelings. Intellect thinks in terms

of figures and logic – life reaches beyond logic and figures and mathematics.

Life is very mysterious; no mathematics is able to explain it. No figures, no statistics are able to

solve life. But intellect does not accept the existence of any mystery; intellect thinks everything is

simple and straight like two plus two making four. It is this non-mysterious, heartless approach of

intellect towards life which has given life a mechanicalness. Every day man goes on becoming more

and more machine-like. But when a man becomes like a machine, we call him efficient, skilled.

A machine is always more efficient than man. And if our emphasis remains only on the efficiency of

the man, one day man will become efficient like machines but will have lost his soul. Man commits

mistakes, machines don’t. We are trying for a man who does not commit mistakes, who is absolutely

efficient, who moves on the unfaltering lines of mathematics.

Moving on the unfaltering lines of mathematics is like a train running on the railway tracks. But the

rivers of life do not run on tracks, they run on unknown, unfamiliar paths. The river of life has a

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freedom which cannot be contained in the fixed structures of intellect – but this is what we have

been trying to do till today.

So the first thing I want to say to you is that education of only intellect is not intelligent and wise.

There are other aspects of life too, and they are more significant than the intellect, because man

does not live by intellect. The sources of man’s living are much deeper than the intellect. Neither

do we love through intellect, nor do we get angry through intellect, nor do we hate through intellect.

Neither do we recognize beauty through intellect, nor do we read song and poetry through intellect,

nor are any deeper experiences of life attained through intellect. It is not surprising if the education of

mere intellect deprives and cuts life off from all the deeper experiences. But we have been imparting

an education only of intellect.

This education has given birth to a very unbalanced man. This unbalanced man goes on doing just

anything; just anything is happening through him, any trouble. And these troubles are absolutely

bound to happen, because when a man becomes unbalanced from within, his outside behavior also

becomes unbalanced. Then there is no movement, no clear goal, no music, no rhythm in his life.

This is the first of our misfortunes – that we have understood education as the education of mere

intellect – not of a total life. The education of a total life will have other meanings.

In my vision, too much weight of intellect completely stops a few things from growing within man. We

start sending five-year-olds to school. Their intellect comes under such a load that their bodies, their

hearts, their feelings – all capacities in their life for deriving bliss and enjoyment – get destroyed. All

juices of life are taken away by the intellect and the rest of the life dries up.

These children grow up heartless, without feeling, empty of any love, machine-like. Their value is

only one: how much higher position they can reach, how much salary they bring back home, how

efficiently they work. Is man born for this? Is man born only for this, that he gets a bigger salary or

sits on a higher chair? Or does man come in life to search for some other wealth of bliss? But in

order to search for that wealth, it is necessary to develop some other things.

In my view – it will appear very strange to you when I say this today – until the whole of mankind

comes to this decision, if not today then tomorrow, that there should be no weight on the child’s

intellect up to the age of twelve or fourteen years of age.... The weight on the child’s intellect should

come only after fourteen years of age. Up to fourteen years of age, all efforts should be made for

the growth of the child’s body and feelings.

The first fourteen years in the child’s life are the most formative years. As the child attains sexual

maturity, only after that is the right development of his intellect easy and appropriate. Before that,

there are other precious parts of his life which should develop. The child’s health should develop,

the child’s feelings should develop, the child’s capacity to love should develop, because the child

whose capacity to love does not grow in childhood, even if he grows to old age there will not be any

growth of love in him.

Childhood is the most pleasant and amazing opportunity for love to grow in children. But we

waste and destroy that time in teaching them mathematics and teaching them geography and the

foolishnesses of history. What is the purpose of it all? If the child does not know much of geography,

there is no great harm in it, and if the child does not learn the names of mad people like Akbar

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and Napoleon and Alexander, it makes no difference at all. If the child does not learn the statistics

of which people have killed how many people, that makes no difference. And to teach them the

nonsense of which emperor was born in what year and died in what year – neither is there any

meaning nor any significance in it. But all those moments in the child’s life which were for developing

love get wasted in teaching him all these stupidities.

Are you aware that all your love after childhood becomes false and empty and deceptive? There is

a basic difference between the love you felt for someone in your childhood and the love you felt for

someone when you had become adult. That sacredness of childhood love, once it is lost – if that

innocence is once lost – to regain it in life becomes very arduous almost impossible.

The whole capacity of childhood should be devoted to the development of love, not to the

development of intellect, because the palace of life that is erected on the foundations of childhood

love, only that can attain to bliss. Bliss has no relationship whatsoever with intellect. But we put

intellect in the very foundation, then the building that arises is not a temple but a factory. If man’s life

is to be made into a factory, the building should arise on the foundation of intellect. And if man’s life

is to be made into a temple, the foundations should be laid in love.

All of childhood should be given to the development of the heart, all efforts should be made for the

development of the heart. And for the development of the heart quite different opportunities are to

be sought, not the opportunities we seek in the schools and colleges. For the development of the

heart it is necessary that the child be under the open sky, near the trees, under the shelter of the

moon and stars, at the river banks and sea shores, in contact with the soil, the earth. The closer the

child to the vast, the more love will grow in him, and the sense and meaning of beauty will develop.

The crime that is being done against small children sitting within closed walls in front of blackboards

– the sin that is happening this way, someday, if not today then tomorrow, mankind will take account

of it and we all will be declared guilty.

Before they have hardly gathered any consciousness, in the name of education we imprison children

within closed rooms and walls, in prisons. And what do we teach them there? What values of life do

we teach them there? Then the wonderful moments of childhood, when the contact with life could

have been established, are lost.

Rabindranath has written, ”I was being imprisoned in the schools. The birds would be singing songs

outside and I had to go on looking at the blackboard. The sounds of the birds would be wonderful,

but I had to listen just to the monotonous voice of the teacher and learn geography. If my ears and

my being reached out to the birds, I had to undergo punishment.”

Then, when Rabindranath started his school for the first time in Shantiniketan, who would give their

children to him to spoil? Rabindranath himself could not get any degree in any university. Fortunate

was he; otherwise the world would have been deprived of a great poet. Blessed was he that his

parents could not succeed and took him out of the school. Had his parents been successful the

world would have suffered a great loss. And how many losses this world has suffered throughout

the history of man cannot be assessed because there is no way to know how many Rabindranaths

would have been lost in the schools.

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When Rabindranath opened his school for the first time, who would send his children there to be

spoiled? If I open a school, would you send your children? No, you would not. Who would send

their children to be spoiled? But still there were some such children of Rabindranath’s friends whom

it was not possible to spoil anymore – they were sent to Rabindranath’s school. They were at the

extreme border, now there was no hope for them to be spoiled any further. Ramanand Chatterji, the

editor of MODERN REVIEW, had also sent his son; he was fed up with him.

Any children who have even a little intelligence, parents certainly get troubled with them. Parents

like non-intelligent, idiotic children, without any genius, very much, because they sit down wherever

they ask them to sit down, and stand up when they ask them to stand up. They neither have any

soul of their own, nor any being of their own.

So Ramanand also had sent his son. After three months Ramanand went to see what the condition

was there, how the school was run. He had no hopes that the school would be running, but what

he saw there amazed him even more. Rabindranath was sitting under a big tree, some ten to fifteen

children sitting around him, and study was going on. Coming closer Ramanand discovered that ten

to fifteen were sitting under the tree, and ten to fifteen were sitting up in the tree. What kind of class

was this?

To Rabindranath he said, ”I had my doubts in the very beginning! What is going on? Is this a class?

I feel sad to see this – the boys sitting up in the tree.”

Rabindranath said, ”I also feel sad: the fruits have ripened, and I am amazed at the children who are

sitting under the tree! I also feel sad. I have become old; otherwise I also would have been in the

top of the tree. The fruits have ripened, the winds have brought the fragrance of the fruits, the tree is

calling, and if children don’t climb it, who else will? The tree has sent the invitation – these children

who are sitting under the tree have already become old. They are not receiving the invitation; the

message is not reaching their nostrils that the fruits have ripened. The tree is giving the call to come!

Sad will be those who have become old and unable to climb, but these children have not yet grown

old! This is what I was thinking, sitting here. Have these children already become old? Have they

not felt the challenge of the tree? Have they not received the message?”

We make the children old in their very childhood. And then if the youth, the freshness disappears

from life, who is responsible? As I see it, too much misconduct is happening, too much oppression

is happening. Much wrong is happening.

The moments of childhood are so wondrous that they will never again come back into life. The

matters of mathematics and accounts can be taken care of later on – the whole of life is lying ahead

– but some precious matters of life can be passed on only in the childhood, which can never be

passed on later.

The children who do not become close to nature, those children will not be able to become close to

God either – this we must understand – because nature is the door to God. Those who have not

experienced in the childhood the one who is present there – that presence of God there, under the

sky, in the sun, on the sands of the ocean, near the trees – will worship in the temples until their old

age, will bow down in front of the stone statues, will learn the GITA, the KORAN and THE BIBLE by

heart; but they can have no connection with God whatsoever. They have already missed the very

door, they have already wandered off the very path.

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The first necessary thing to know about right education is that we should be able to provide children

closeness to nature, not bringing them close to the man-made houses but to all that is created by the

energy of life, because it is through this that they will be able to come close to God; it is through this

that they will be able to come to love; it is through this that they will be able to understand the secrets

of prayer and then their life will arise out of that.... Love should come to them first, mathematics later,

because no mathematics can deceive a man who has learnt love.

Somebody asked Saint Augustine, ”What shall we do that no evil is done by us?”

Saint Augustine said, ”Do not ask this. I know only one thing, that if you know love, then whatever

you will do it cannot be evil.”

Augustine said not to bother about how not to do evil; that is not the question. If there is no love

within you, then whatever you do will be evil; and if there is love within you, then whatever you do it

cannot be evil.

But what education of love, what initiation in love have we given? What certificates of love have we

conferred? And then if in three thousand years man has become completely loveless, murderous

and violent, who is responsible for it? None other than our education can be held responsible for it.

But the teachers need not feel offended by this, because putting this responsibility on education

means I am giving lots of honor to education; I am saying education is the center of life. Hence

the teacher should be ready to bear the main responsibility; tomorrow the main honor too can be

his. Tomorrow, if life is transformed, it is education which will receive the honor. And today if life

has become polluted and poisoned, then the educationist should be prepared to accept the main

charge and responsibility also. This is indicative of education being central. What I am saying is

very respectful – that education is central. Neither the politicians nor the religious leaders are as

responsible as the teacher is.

But the coming world will also only bestow honor on the teacher if he is able to lay down some basis

for changing life. If you are not able to change it, tomorrow, children themselves will start changing

it.

A friend of mine has just returned from a trip to Holland and Belgium. He told me that the highschool

boys and girls there have started refusing to study any further. They have big youth centers,

they have big unions, and what they say is, What will come out of studying any further? They ask

their parents, ”You are very educated and what has happened in your lives? So why unnecessarily

force us through the same machine, passing through which you have not attained anything?” And

parents have no answer for it.

If your children also ask you what you have attained by being educated, what answer have you

got? Will you show them your coffers? Will you show them your big houses? Will you show them

your chairs you have obtained in Delhi? What will you show to the children? Do you have anything

you have attained by being educated? Can you say with great certainty, ”My self-confidence is

great”? Can you say with great certainty, ”My gratitude towards life has grown”? Can you say, ”I

have become blessed”? You cannot.

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So children are going to ask you, if not today then tomorrow, and if you don’t have the answer, I

must tell you children are going to refuse to go to your factories of education. They have already

started refusing in highly educated countries, and their refusal is right. But before they refuse, can’t

we change our whole way of thinking about life?

Up to the age of sexual maturity, until the child has ripened from the point of view of sex – be it a

boy or a girl – till then the central education of the child’s life should be of love and heart – because

later the whole of life will come out of that. The child will become a wife or a husband, the child

will become a mother or a father – all the emotional relationships of their lives then will be the

relationships of love and heart, not of mathematics or geography or history.

No mother can become a better mother because of studying history; nor can a father become a

better father by studying geography. Something else is needed that can give birth to a better mother,

a better father; something else is needed that can give birth to a better wife, a better husband. Today,

neither are there mothers in the world nor fathers, neither wives nor husbands: there are pseudorelationships

in these names. Have you ever looked at the person you call your wife? It is possible

that you may have loved someone you don’t call your wife, but never the person you call your wife.

The person a wife calls husband – has she ever loved him, respected him? Has her being ever

loved him, prayed for him? Has she ever taken any step to make his life rich and musical? Not at

all. Rather, his wife scatters as many thorns for him as possible, or creates as many obstacles as

possible. And the husbands also do the same, parents also do the same. They say that they love

their children; but we have not known love – how will we love children?

If we were loving our children, there could not have been so many wars in the world. Who is the

parent who will send his children to war? If we were loving our children the world could not have

become so ugly. If we were loving our children, I go as far as to say, we would not have given birth

to children... because which loving parent will be ready to give birth to their children in this ugly

and dirty world? They will excuse themselves, saying, ”How to bring our children into such a world?

Tomorrow, when we face them, we will feel so ashamed in front of them that we gave birth to them

in this world. How to send them out into this ugly world full of immorality and darkness?” Parents

would have refused to give birth to children if they had love in their hearts.

But no, they go on giving birth to children. They have no concern at all for the children. They go on

raising their children; they go on raising their children as the fodder for the guns and the cannons.

They go on getting their children butchered in the cause of everchanging names and new tricks – in

the name of India, in the name of Pakistan, in the name of China, in the name of communism, in the

name of democracy. Parents are ever ready to get their children murdered in the name of any big

slogan. These names and slogans are too big for them – the children are too small!

If in this world there was love in the hearts of parents for their children, a different world would have

been born in which there could be no wars – because every child is some mother’s child, some

father’s son. Who would have agreed to send their children to war? We would have said, ”Let

Pakistan perish, let India perish, but the children cannot go to war! Whether China is saved or not,

whether Russia is saved or not, whether America remains or not, no mother is ready to send her son

to war. The wars would have vanished from the world, as well as politics, politicians and nations.

But nobody loves their sons, we simply do not know love. We simply have no acquaintance with

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love. We simply have not come across love. The moments that could have been the moments of

meeting with love we have wasted in learning numerous useless things.

So in my view, the foundation of education should be love, not intellect. Intellect is only a means.

If there is love within, then the intellect becomes just a means to spread and develop love. And if

there is no love within, then the intellect becomes a means for spreading lovelessness.

Truman gave the order to drop the atom bomb on Hiroshima. Next morning, I have heard, the

journalists surrounded Truman and asked, ”Could you sleep peacefully last night?”

Truman said, ”Very peacefully. As I heard that Hiroshima and Nagasaki had been turned into ashes,

and that Japan would surrender, immediately I went to sleep peacefully for the first time.”

None of those journalists even asked, ”One hundred and twenty thousand people have been killed

and you could sleep peacefully? Are you a human being or something else?” But that man’s name

is: True man, the real man!

Our education is giving birth to just such true men, in whom there is no humanness, in whom there

is no energy for life, no compassion; who have no waterfall of love. Those who have no waterfalls of

love can be computers; they can be machines for calculations, not human beings. The first symptom

of a human being is the love in him. The greater the love, the greater the man. The greater the love,

the greater that man’s closeness to God.

Therefore I want to say only one basic thing: The first steps of education need to be the steps of love.

And in order to take the steps in love closed walls are not needed but the open sky, birds, trees and

stars and the moon. The basic education should not be of geography but of beauty. Basic education

should not be of science but of art. Basic education should not be of tension but of relaxation and

peace.

If we can arrange the education of children up to fourteen years of age this way, then later on it is

difficult to spoil these children, then they can be sent to any school or any university whatsoever.

Then they can be taught anything, there will be no danger from it in any way. If a sword is put in the

hands of these people, there will be no harm from that sword. If an atom bomb is given to them,

there will be no harm done through it. Then even the greatest of power in the hands of love becomes

creative.

Science has discovered the greatest power for man, but education has not been able to give him a

loving heart. Great power is dangerous in the hands of those who have no love.

Nadirshah was coming towards India. He asked an astrologer if to sleep too much was very bad: ”I

sleep too much. Is it really a bad thing to sleep for too long?”

The astrologer said, ”No, if people like you sleep twenty-four hours a day it is much better. If bad

people fall asleep forever, it is better. Good people’s waking is good and bad people’s sleeping is

good.”

It is said that Nadirshah had that man beheaded. But he had said a very true thing. It has remained

an old custom to behead truth-sayers. He had said the right thing: it is good if the bad man sleeps,

and it is good if the good man is awake.

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Similarly, I say, a loving man being powerful is good; a loveless man being impotent, powerless, is

good. If power is in the hands of loving persons, then life grows; and if power is in the hands of a

loveless person, then life will become only a graveyard and nothing else – and this is what we have

been doing. It is necessary to contemplate on this.

I have come to request and urge the teachers only this – that they think; that they think about

how the heart can be developed. And if it is necessary – and it feels to me this way – if for a

hundred years all the colleges and universities of the world are closed down and man’s mind is left

completely uneducated, then too there will be no harm compared to the harm that is going to happen

in continuing the current education for the coming hundred years.

Man was uneducated for thousands of years. Those people, those uneducated people also have

known bliss, known song, known love. They too created a world. In their lives there was also

happiness and smiles – more than in us, much more than in us. We have lost everything.

It is necessary to bring back man’s naturalness.

I do not say that education should be abolished, I am saying that the foundation of education should

be changed. And if only this education is to continue, if there is no other alternative, if this education

is the only alternative, then I say let this whole education be stopped and man go back to the jungles.

Then too we will not lose anything.

But I feel there is an alternative. Education can be made total. And if only one thing gets added to it:

if its foundations become that of love, of feeling, of heart, of compassion and kindness, if we develop

man’s heart first and then his intellect, if the heart leads and the intellect becomes its follower, then

this education can become the right education.

I have not lost hope. If I had lost hope I would not say these things to you. I say these things to the

teachers in the hope that they will think. There is a great power in their hands. Today or tomorrow

the world will hold them responsible if something goes wrong. It is appropriate to reflect before that

happens.

If I come back again among you, I will be able to talk to you about how to impart the education of

love. Today, if only your attention can be drawn to it, if only this much attention can be drawn to the

fact that the house of education based on the foundations of intellect can make a factory but not a

temple, I will consider my talk complete. If the temple of life is to be created, the foundation will have

to be laid upon love.

Childhood – the period up to fourteen years of age – is a wonderful opportunity for the growth of

love. If we miss at that time, we miss it forever. Then there remains no way that we can bring about

any change in it. And to bring about a change during the childhood, nothing is needed to be done –

the streams of love were eager to flow. We knowingly stopped them, we did not allow them to flow.

If we can only become an opportunity for their streams of love to flow, we will be able to give birth to

a totally new kind of man. And a new man is absolutely needed.

Neither making more and new hydrogen and atom bombs is needed as much, nor is it needed as

much that we build sputniks and spaceships to reach to the stars and the moon, nor is it needed

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as much that we measure the depths of the oceans, nor is it needed as much that we build very

big factories, bridges and highways. All these will be useless if man goes wrong. They will all be

useless.

At this time, there is only one urgent issue and that is: How do we create the right man? Man is

wrong: how to create the right man? Think in this direction.

I said these few things to you, you listened to me with such love and silence – I am very grateful.

Finally, I offer my salutations to the god residing within all of you, but which you are unaware of.

Please accept my salutations.

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CHAPTER 8

The Light of Disbelief

14 August 1969 pm

This discourse was given to students.

Just as an individual becomes old, the society also becomes old. Just as an individual dies, the

society dies and civilizations also die, but no individual can refuse to become old or refuse to die.

But a society, a civilization, can refuse to become old and to die if it so desires, although the society

which refuses to die will cease to have a new life. It is easy to refuse to die, but if a new life is not

available a sort of dead life begins.

The civilization of this country has long since ceased to have a new birth. We are as we have been

for thousands of years. Even if there are a few changes, they have come from outside; changes

have not happened from within ourselves. If we have progressed it is due to our being pushed by

others, not to our own inner push. We have moved ahead out of compulsion, but our soul is shackled

to our past.

Our society is as good as dead. Since ages sprouts of new life have ceased to grow. But we are

neither unhappy nor anxious because of this; indeed we feel happy and fortunate because of it. We

go on continuously claiming that there are no scriptures older than ours, that no temples are older

than ours. We never feel concerned for the fact that all this fuss about our being ancient is the proof

of our having ceased to have a new life.

Those who are capable of being new let the old disappear; those who are unable to have a new

life go on praising the old and go on telling old stories. They go on carrying old names and old

scriptures in their heads. But this is all dead weight and results in destroying the soul and dignity of

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the country. Therefore there is no sadder community than ours on this earth. Our sadness is like

that of some old ruined society; our mind has been like some old building, old and dilapidated, full

of layers of dust and rubbish.

Where the streams of life cease to flow, the life becomes sad, stinks and becomes dirty. If we dam

the flow of a river, the water will become dirty and stinking. It is not only that the streets of our town

are full of filth and dirt, but the condition of the whole country has become like those streets. The

streets of the town look dirty, but the streets of the mind cannot even be seen. A day may come

when we shall clean the streets – if not today then tomorrow – but since the streets of the mind

cannot be seen, who can clean them? The outer roads may soon become clean, but the inner roads

will remain dirty. Just by the outer roads becoming clean, nothing of the inner can change. In our

country many new things are coming and we are becoming modern. New children are being born

daily, but our mind continues to remain old. It is thousands of years old, not just ordinarily old.

If we study the rules and regulations of our society, we will find that we have not made any progress

since Manu Maharaj. Manu happened about three thousand five hundred years ago, and the Shudra

that was given birth by Manu is still living. Even today the talk of making a Shudra free of his

stigma is considered revolutionary. If the talk of removing the stigma of a Shudra is still considered

revolutionary, it means that the Shudra is still very strong and very much feared by the higher castes.

How can a rule made by somebody three and a half thousand years ago, continue to live, and cannot

be removed?

It is not known at what point of time in our history we decided that a man lives according to his

fate. Man has changed the whole world, including those things that were considered predestined;

the longevity of man is increased, the fatal diseases have been cured, many other things have been

changed – but India continues to live according to its fate. Our attitude towards destiny has not

changed. Even today we can see a student studying in a university, showing the lines of his palm to

an astrologer sitting on the footpath, and paying twenty - five paise! What will happen to this country

if a university student still shows the lines of his palm...? Sometimes he denies this fatalism, but at

the time of his examination he can be found standing in front of the Hanuman Temple with folded

hands.

Our mind is very old. Our exterior is becoming new. Our mode of clothing has become as new as

it is anywhere in the whole world, but our inner being is old. Our equipment has become new – not

because of us, but because of the pulls and pushes of others, unavoidably, out of compulsion. But

in the inner life, where there can be no pushes from the outside, where nobody is persuading us, we

continue to remain old.

I was staying in Calcutta with a doctor who had passed his F.R.C.S. examination in England. He

was very famous in Calcutta. One evening, when he was taking me to a meeting and when we had

come out under the porch of the building, his daughter sneezed. The doctor asked me to stop awhile

because of this sneezing: it is considered a bad omen.

I asked, ”What relationship could there be between my going out and her sneezing? Why should

the sneezing prevent me from going?”

He said he knew the causes of sneezing, but still where was the harm in waiting for a minute or two?

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I said it was not a question of my waiting due to her sneezing, but that the belief in this superstition

stops the whole country’s soul from beginning some work. This belief is dangerous. Waiting for a

minute or even for an hour is not the question; the question is of our thinking and believing in such

a superstition in the twentieth century. When a doctor believes it, it becomes highly objectionable.

But our ways of thinking have become so rigid that we do not change. In fact we have ceased to think

- for thousands of years we have been taught not to think. A person who thinks is not considered

good, because he is creating a spirit of rebellion. Those who do not think are like sheep rather than

men, following one after the other: the only reason for their walking is that the one in front of them

is walking. The whole crowd is continuing to walk that way.

If some Indian begins to think and asks, ”Why are you walking like this?” the reply will be, ”My father

also walked like this.” This is not only our humiliation, but it is the humiliation of our forefathers also.

Even if we regress for a thousand years the reply will be the same. Because this was being done

then we are continuing to do like this.

Now people know how rain happens. Rain has never come as a result of doing religious sacrifices,

nor can it ever come, but we are still trying to get rain through religious sacrifices! The whole world

knows that if water is not coming from the tap, no religious sacrifice can bring it. How much more

difficult to get rain from the sky. If well water has dried up, it is not possible to get water in the well

through a religious sacrifice. The sky is far away – how can we make it rain? But people in India

are still trying to get rain from the sky through religious practices! However, through scientific means

there are countries who get rain from the clouds and who can drive away the clouds if they do not

want the rain.

But we can do such things only if our old ideas can be removed. We think it is only necessary to do

incantations in the presence of the holy fire; we think only by throwing rice, wheat, ghee etc in the

fire – things which are in short supply – more such things can be had. This has never been possible.

Otherwise, we have done so many religious sacrifices that India should have been the richest society

in the world. We have not heard that America ever did any religious sacrifices, but a lot of wealth

rained from the sky there. Perhaps in Russia, they would send such believers in sacrifices to mental

hospitals. And we? we go on doing such sacrifices since the last five thousand years, but nobody

is ready to question our madness. If now the government of Gujarat does not allow such sacrifices,

destroying grains, it is not because the government believes that the sacrifices are wrong or sinful

or irreligious, but because the government does not have enough wheat to fulfill the commitments

of rationing. The government does not allow burning wheat in the sacrificial fire just because of the

commitments of rationing. The government should say that even if we do have enough wheat, we

will not allow such sacrifices. But that much courage the government does not have; therefore they

say, ”We do not have enough wheat to fulfill the rationing commitments.”

But the people doing such sacrifices are clever. They say, ”We will do sacrifices without wheat -

but sacrifices cannot stop. We will do incantations and put something else in the fire instead, but

sacrifices will continue.” Those who are against such sacrifices do not give convincing arguments;

they do not challenge them to justify such things in a laboratory. How can world peace be achieved

through such religious sacrifices? One person is restless: can he attain peace through a sacrifice?

Go to a mental hospital: prove that a madman can be cured through a sacrifice. Where the whole

world has become crazy, can it become peaceful by your sacrifices? Nothing is clear. The greatest

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damage is not done because of wastage of wheat; as long as we remain involved in the wrong

remedies, right solutions cannot be found.

If people believe that by tying an amulet diseases can be cured, medical science cannot be

developed. The damage is not caused by the amulet as such – maybe one man may die or ten

men may die – but the greatest damage will be the nondevelopment of medical science. Medical

science can be developed if we really look for the causes of the disease – from where and why

the disease arises. We can develop medical science through scientific means, not by asking an

exorcist or a charmer or a scholar of scriptures. To cure the disease, we must know the causes of

the disease and destroy those causes.

In America, Sweden, Switzerland, and other first world countries, the percentage of killer diseases

has been reduced so much that one can say that man was never so healthy before. The longevity

has increased. In Russia during the 1917 revolution, the average age of a Russian was twentythree

years! We can say that after every year they added one more year to their life. In Sweden and

Switzerland the average life expectancy is eighty-two years. The scientists and thinkers there say

that if we wish there is not much difficulty in giving man an average life span of one hundred years.

When that one hundred years becomes the average, you can find an old man aged two hundred

and fifty years. In our country, where the average age is only thirty years, we can find an old man

of ninety years – three times the average – so it should be easy to find an old man of three hundred

years if the average age rises up to one hundred. At this time in Russia there are over one thousand

people who are a hundred and fifty years old.

The whole world is changing everything, but in India the traditional structures are decisive. We go

on saying that we are short of wheat and clothes and we say it in such a way that we look helpless.

We are starving and naked since the last five thousand years – but our way of living is such that we

may continue to remain so for a further five thousand years. In this the fault is not that of our land or

the sky, but of our wrong way of thinking.

In 1940, Russia burnt wheat instead of coal in their trains, because they found that coal was more

valuable than wheat. Wheat can be grown every year, but for coal to form in mines takes lakhs of

years. Therefore coal must be burnt economically. Now in this world, in one country people burn

wheat in their train engines and in another country people do not have enough wheat for their bellies!

In such a situation, one is forced to wonder what is the matter.

... And it is not the case that America was rich from the beginning; the wealth has been created

there during the last fifty or sixty years. Otherwise they were as poor as we are. And remember, in

America, the American Indians, the natives, are still poor. The richness is not just due to the land in

America.

One German thinker, Count Keyserling, returned after visiting India. In his book he has made a

strange observation. When I was reading it I was surprised. He has written that India is a rich

country where poor people live! I was thinking, ”How can this be? If the country is rich, how can the

people remain poor, and if the people are poor, how can the country be called rich?.” Then I realized

that he was just being ironical. He was just trying to say that the people can become rich, but the

intelligence, the mind and the thinking of the people living there is for remaining poor. They cannot

become rich. If this country can get people like the Americans to live here, this country will become

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richer than America. We have everything, except the thinking mind. Our habits for thousands of

years have been not of thinking, but of avoiding thinking. When it is a question of thinking, we would

rather avoid thinking! If we have a problem we will go straight to the temple, but will not think of a

solution for a problem.

Recently I was in Bihar. Thousands of famines have happened in Bihar since the time of Buddha,

but the people of Bihar have done nothing. There is a lot of water underground in Bihar, but they do

not dig wells. Every year they are waiting for the famine and begging for help to go on living. They

do nothing! When the famine comes, they accept it and beg. When there is famine, the leaders of

the whole country begin to ask for donations and help. When the famine is over, nobody bothers.

The same situation continues, there will be no change.

One eminent economist wrote a book called 1975. He has announced in that book that between

1975 and 1980 there will be a great famine in this country, when ten to twenty crores of people may

die. He has forecast a great famine in India the like of which has not been recorded in the history

of the world. But we will read this and continue to live as before. We shall see when the year 1978

comes. We will pray to God, make big religious sacrifices. God is always on our side! If God is not

on our side, at least the sadhus and saints, the agents of God, are on our side. We will again pray

to them. We are always praying to them, and they are always misguiding us. They will again go on

telling us the same things as they have done thousands of times before, without any results. But

we are not ready to think! Whenever calamity comes, the same teachers come and we go on only

asking them! We have never thought of applying our own minds to the situation.

Now we will have to think; otherwise, in the near future we will not only be poor and hungry but

our soul will also become poor and hungry. It can also happen that compared to those who have

gone before, our soul and consciousness can fall backwards. If we continue to live like this it is very

possible that there will be no difference between us and the primitives living in the jungle. During

the next fifty years we may reach the condition where the present difference between us and the

primitives will be the difference between America, Russia, Europe and ourselves.

Even now the whole world is afraid of us, because they see that the vastness of our begging country

is so much that it is very difficult to satisfy the needs. Now they are also not ready to do anything.

Twenty years ago they had thought that if they helped us, everything would be alright. But with

their help we only continued to increase our population. We are aggravating our problems. Now for

them the situation will become very unhappy, if the poor Eastern countries, especially countries like

India, go on increasing their population, and if they go on living without adequate food and clothing

– because it is difficult to tolerate such great misery and poverty in one part of the earth, when the

other part is rolling in riches.

... But what are we doing?

If we look at the problems of our life all around, if we take a newspaper and read, I do not think

we are even thinking about any of the big problems of our country. What are we thinking? We are

arguing about the water of the river Narmada: does it belong to Madhya Pradesh or Gujarat? It is

very difficult to find as foolish people as us. Our newspapers are full of controversies regarding a

district remaining in Mysore or Maharashtra! Bullets will rain on innocent people! Our problems are

not problems but diseases. We are not trying to solve the problems of life that are facing us. When

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these problems catch hold of us, we cry and weep; then there is only one remedy and that is to pray

to God! When we could do something, when we had time to solve the problems, we wasted our time

in controversies, and when we become helpless later we have no alternative except to pray to God.

Remember that even God does not listen to those who only pray. He listens to those who work so

hard that even God feels that something should be done. If there is a God anywhere, he helps those

who help themselves.

Swami Rama had gone to Japan. There was an old German aged ninety traveling on the same boat.

At that age he was learning the Chinese language. It is difficult to learn Chinese; perhaps there is

no other language on earth as difficult as Chinese. The reason for this is that the Chinese language

has no alphabet; it is a pictorial language, there is a picture for every word. If you desire to express

a quarrel or a fight there is no word for it, but there is a picture showing two women sitting under

one roof which means quarrel. Thus at least a lakh of words will have to be learnt just to have an

ordinary acquaintance with the Chinese language. That man aged ninety trying to learn Chinese! -

is he mad? Ramatirtha was wondering what could have happened to that old man. When he was

studying since sunrise, he was not aware when sunset happened; when it was dark and when his

old eyes were tired, he would return to his cabin.

After about three days Ramatirtha asked him if he ever heard that it takes about ten years to learn

the Chinese language. He asked him what was his age. The old man replied, ”God may be keeping

count of my age; I have no time to waste knowing such futile things.”

Ramatirtha said, ”It is okay, but it will take ten years to learn and the possibility of your surviving ten

years is small.”

The old man said, ”My experience of ninety years tells me that I have survived ninety years though

I could have died any day; I have deceived death for ninety years. Because I have not died so far, I

can live still more. But may I ask what is your age?”

Ramatirtha was very much embarrassed, because he was only thirty. He told him he was thirty

years old. Then the old man said, ”My son, I would like to tell you why your country has become old.

You are not doing anything in your country except awaiting death. You are bound to become old.”

I feel that if there is a God somewhere, he will be merciful to this old man who is so persevering.

If there is no God we don’t think of him; but if there is a God, he must be considering giving him

a longer life. I heard later that he had lived fifteen more years. Not only did he learn the Chinese

language and not only did he read Chinese books, he left behind a book written by him in the

Chinese language! Ramatirtha died after only two years, but that old man lived a life of a hundred

and five years. I believe that his liveliness played a valuable role in making him live longer. God

should help him live longer – if there is a God somewhere – because he was struggling so much for

life.

Elsewhere in the world people have converted deserts into green farms, and in India our farms are

slowly getting converted into deserts. In many places God made everything grow where nothing

ever grew before. Where there was no rainfall he let rivers flow abundantly; he made many things

happen where nothing had ever happened. Where there were sand dunes yesterday, where man

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had never entered, he created beautiful townships. Therefore, if God is there somewhere, he must

be listening to the prayers of the working people.

Our idle prayers are not listened to – to this day, nowhere are such prayers listened to, but still we

go on making idle prayers. No, such idlers are never heard and can never be heard. But we are not

willing to think, we have given up thinking. Our children also do not think. We just go on walking like

a crowd of blind people. Is this right?

I am asking this question everywhere in this country, whether this is right and proper that we go on

walking like blind people. Should we make some decisions or not regarding our life? Should we

strive or not to make our life better?

But no, we have reached such conclusions that the question of making our life better does not arise.

We have invented such explanations for our present condition of life which tell us that there is no

need to think, there is no need to work, and there is no need to change anything. If somebody is

poor, we say he is poor due to his fate; if somebody is rich, we say he is rich due to his fate. Then

we should conclude that all unlucky people are born in India, and God is very pleased with America,

and he allows all lucky people to take birth there. If somebody is poor, we say he must have done

some wrong deeds in past lives; if somebody is rich, we say he must have done good deeds in his

past lives. Does it mean that God considers this country to be hell, and goes on sending all sinful

people here? It should mean therefore that all sinful people are born in India and all virtuous people

are born somewhere else. Does it look right that all sinful people should be born here?

No. Such conclusions are wrong. We have to think about eradicating poverty. We have not yet done

so. We have invented only one explanation: that a person remains poor due to his past deeds. Now

there is no need to think, the matter is over. Now you try to improve your next life. You cannot do

anything in this life about your past life, because of which you are now suffering. Thus past is past;

about the future, what can we do now? Therefore today we have not to do anything, not to think

anything. In this way we have saved ourselves from doing anything today!

We will have to give up such suicidal thinking. I do not say that what I am telling you is right; I am only

saying this, that whatsoever anybody may say, nothing is going to be right just by anybody saying

it. All of us will have to be ready to discuss and deliberate together. Every question will have to be

raised again and again. All these questions should be put before the whole country. We should not

let future generations be brought up in the same belief system. We have believed in everything for

a long time; we have now to activate the process of thinking.

Our method of teaching in schools and colleges is such that when the students come back after their

education, they do not have the capacity to think. When they come out after learning science, the

structure of their mind continues to remain old. They catch hold of science like blind people; they are

not aware of the fact that to catch hold of science like blind people is dangerous, because science

is changing daily. When we come out of universities, or while we are still studying in universities,

science continues to change. It is no use catching hold of science like blind people. One has to go

on thinking and contemplating so that one can do something directly to solve the problems of life.

If in such a big country as ours the process of thinking becomes free, perhaps we shall be capable

of changing our life in all directions. There is no necessity for us to remain poor. It is our ignorance

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that keeps us poor. Now we do not have to suffer from so many diseases; it is only our ignorance

that has kept us sick. There is no necessity to make this earth such a hell. Science has opened up

such great possibilities that if we think properly we can make this earth a heaven, with the help of

new knowledge.

But this is not happening, because our minds are old and the structure is absolutely closed. All

minds are closed, just as if a person closes all the doors and windows of his house and sits hiding

within. He opens neither a door nor a window; neither sun rays enter nor fresh air comes. He is

decaying inside and dying. We are closed in the same way.

No. Our mind must be open in all directions. We should be able to doubt the Gita, we should be

able to doubt Ramayana; then our mind will be open and free. Then we will begin to think. But we

say Mahavira was omniscient; whatsoever he has known is true for all time. Whatsoever is written

in the scriptures about the moon is right - even the Shankaracharya says such things! He says that

in the first place actually nobody has stepped on the moon, it is all false rumors; secondly, even if

they have reached the moon, it is not the same moon referred to in our scriptures. That moon is far

far away. Just see to what extent we have closed our minds!

One old woman came and asked me, ”Have you heard what the Shankaracharya has said?”

I said, ”I have heard, and if our country is sane enough, mental treatment of such people will have

to be done. ”

That old woman said, ”What are you saying? He is our world teacher. Whatsoever he says should

be right.”

I said, ”It appears right to you. It will continue to appear right to you, because your mind is as closed

as his.”

But this will not do any more. If not today, then tomorrow they will be proved mad, along with the

whole groups of their followers. But we go on and on unchanged!

Very recently I was in Patna, where I was sitting with the Shankaracharya on the same podium.

The Shakaracharya said that it is not necessary to educate women. Why? - because Hinduism has

given so much respect to women that there is no necessity to educate them! He said one more

interesting thing, and everybody continued to listen to him without protest. He also said that in the

West, if a woman wants to be a doctor she has to study medicine; our Hindu religion is so great that

if a woman gets married to a doctor, everyone calls her ’doctorani’! There is not so much necessity to

learn. And the women who were sitting in front of the dais clapped and praised the Shankaracharya.

They were very pleased to know how easy it is to become a doctorani in India. It is not necessary to

learn medicine, it is enough to become a doctor’s wife! If we are thinking this way, are we thinking

or not thinking at all?

We are listening to such things and continue to listen to such things! We are doing such things that

the whole world laughs at us. The whole world wonders what has happened to this country. Perhaps

because the whole country has ceased to think for a long time, its mind has got rusted. It happens.

If you stop walking for a long time or if you bind your feet for two years, your legs will not be able

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to walk. In this the legs are not at fault. If for two years a man remains in darkness and closes his

eyes, his eyes will not be able to see light; seeing light, the eyes will close. The eyes will lose their

capacity to see. The light will become frightening. If a race or a society or a man ceases to think for

thousands of years, the ability to think is also lost.

Whatsoever we do continues to be carried on; whatsoever we do, the edge sharpens. In whatsoever

we continue to do we become more proficient and the skill gets developed. Whatsoever we do not do

remains undeveloped. We have ceased to think, so our thinking has got rusted; therefore we are not

able to think about anything. We are standing in the stream of life helpless, powerless, and getting

pushed and pulled. If slavery comes we become slaves, if independence comes we will become

independent. The independence is also taken for granted, like the slavery. Nothing happens within

us. If tomorrow slavery comes we will again become slaves. We are not worried. If we fall sick we

accept it; if we become poor it is okay; if there is famine and we die it is okay; if there are floods it is

okay. Whatsoever comes we accept.

Are we human beings, or have we become like machines that whatsoever happens we allow it to

happen and go on just looking at it? Have we got no challenges in life, have we no intention of

changing our lives? Have we lost our soul within? We are talking about soul continuously – it seems

soul is something available readymade in the market that we can just go and buy. Or did we just

read the scriptures and get the soul? Or repeating ”Rama Naama,” did we get the soul? The soul

is available only to those who continue to fight against the whole ugliness of life, all the miseries,

ignorance and darkness of life. Soul is the fruit of struggle and strife.

Those who lose truth have only stories to tell. If you meet a poor man he will only be talking about

money; if you meet a sick person he will be talking about health. Nobody talks about health except

those who are sick. A healthy man just lives; when does he have time even to talk? Does a sick

person ever sit quietly and talk about health? He reads a book on naturopathy to know what health

is, how to become healthy, what is the definition of health. Once health is lost it takes time to again

understand the meaning of health. A healthy person lives health – has he time to read about health?

When one loses his soul he goes on talking about soul everywhere. When God is lost there begins

talk about God. One talks about whatsoever is lost.

But since we go on talking a lot about the soul there is a feeling that we are knowers of the soul. No,

we are not knowers of the soul at all; we have not done anything towards knowing the soul. We have

neither thought about it nor have we struggled for it. When we have not accepted any challenge for

it, how will the soul be born? We have never called out for it. We just go on talking about the soul.

I will tell you an event and finish my talk.

A friend of mine sent me a pamphlet from America. In that pamphlet there was an amusing article.

In that article jokes about many races of the world were told. It was written that if you make an

Englishman drunk he will become silent; you cannot make him speak a word. Actually in reality an

Englishman is always silent. If you happen to travel with an Englishman in a train he will not even

recognize your presence; even if you are together for twenty-four hours he will remain silent. He is

like a man closed into himself: he will not talk to you. But when you make him drunk this quality

of keeping quiet will be enhanced and he will not talk at all. If a Frenchman is made drunk he will

begin to sing and dance, as is the case in life: he goes on singing and dancing. If a Danish man is

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made drunk he will become voracious by attacking food. As he is, when a Danish man sits for taking

meals, it is not easy to move him away from the dining table.

In the same way jokes about all races were written in that article, but there was no mention of

Indians. My friend therefore asked me, ”What will happen if an Indian is made drunk?”

I replied that the answer is well known: if an Indian is made drunk he will begin to preach about the

soul and God. Actually, due to his poverty an Indian cannot easily get liquor, so he has to talk about

the soul and god even without liquor. We Indians are a talkative community; we have stopped living

and doing because we have ceased to think.

Thinking is the most distinctive quality of man, the most foundational quality. Thinking is supportive

of the very life of man. Only because of his ability to think is man different from animals. If man

ceases to think he will become like an animal. The condition in India is very much like that. If you go

to a small village you will find the people sleeping just where a cow is standing, where a buffalo or a

bullock is tied to a pole. The man is just sleeping with them. If you look deeply you will see a great

similarity between man and animal. They are staying together, and go on living together quietly. And

people calling the cow ”mother” certainly are not expected to be different from the offspring of a cow!

By giving up thinking we have given up the path of endeavor for humanity as a whole. We are

just standing like animals. No development is happening, no progress – nowhere to go, we are

standing silently, static and dead. This should not continue for long. It is not right to continue like

that anymore. Let us change this. To break this habit a crowd is not necessary. Once every person

begins to think for himself, all around thousands of things will begin to happen. When you begin to

think, you will throw away an amulet that was tied on you foolishly. If you begin to think, you will ask

if quarrels about a temple and a mosque can ever arise among good human beings? You will ask

only if you think – hundreds of questions will arise if you think. And when questions arise, answers

will have to be found. If you do not get answers you will have to be ready to give up that which is

wrong. If you get answers, what is right will be in your hands.

Thinking is arduous, a difficult process. Thinking is not very convenient. Not to think is very

convenient. If somebody is thinking for us, we just believe in him; we have nothing more to do.

We are in the habit of having all our work – our thinking – done by others... and we are using the

work of those who lived long long ago. Ages have passed since Krishna. That poor Krishna may

have done the thinking; we just carry on with what he had thought! We read the Gita; our great

saints are looking into the Gita for answers. When some question arises in life we open the Gita and

look into it. Has Krishna completed all thinking for us? And our work is only to continue to live on

that borrowed thinking? If we do not begin to think we will not be able to create the Krishna within

us. By listening to the Gita, Krishna will not be born. Only those who are able to think as quickly and

clearly as Krishna will be able to give birth to Krishna-consciousness.

I am telling you this in the hope that perhaps this hammering may activate the process of thinking

within you. I do not want you to believe in what I say. Those who want you to believe in them are not

strengthening your thinking process, but are cutting the roots of all thinking. Do not believe any such

talk. We have been believing in the talks of such people since lifetimes. Search within yourselves

now. Make a firm decision in life: If I have no thought of my own, my life is uselessly spent. Before

death at least I should have some thinking about myself, so that when I am brought before God I

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should be able to say that I had thought like this or that; I had lived according to my thinking; that

my life was not just a borrowed life. Otherwise, if we come before God as we are now, there will be

nothing else but the talk borrowed all along.

God may ask you, ”What is your own? Have you yourself thought of anything? Have you lived your

life? How much consciousness have you developed ?”

We would then have to reply, ”No, we were only reading the Gita and the Ramayana, and we were

believing in priests and were following the mahatmas. Where is the necessity for us to think? There

are many mahatmas in our country; they are doing our work.”

God will say that he had questioned those mahatmas also; they had replied that they were following

some earlier mahatmas!

You have always been following someone. Why have you never thought for yourself? Those who do

not think for themselves can never be themselves; they do not develop their being. Such persons

cannot become individuals. One who has escaped being an individual, can he ever be religious?

How will he know the truth? How can he gain admittance into the temple of God? The first condition

for getting admitted into God’s temple is to be an individual. You will have to take something of your

own to offer. God will ask you to surrender: you must have something of your own to surrender.

What have we got to surrender? Ask this question to yourselves. Search within and think, and

perhaps you may find the answer. In this country, if only a few people begin to think the state of being

old and archaic may drop, a new soul may take birth. The inertia will go away and consciousness

may begin to develop. If that happens, perhaps we shall be able to stand on this earth on our own

legs. Others have already set their feet on the moon and have come back, whereas our feet are

shaky even on this earth, afraid of falling down. Others have already stood firmly on the moon – but

what about us? We are not even able to stand on this earth! This does not become us. But we are

clever: we do not see our condition, but go on repeating our old talk about being the world teachers.

We claim that we are the leaders of the world, that the whole world is looking at us for guidance!

Nobody is looking towards anybody; everybody is looking towards himself. Do not be in any such

delusion that the whole world is looking towards you. Nobody has time to either look at you, nor is

there any such necessity. Nobody is waiting for you to get knowledge.

Our present condition shows that we are under deep layers of ignorance. Who is going to come to

you for knowledge? Is there any evidence about your ability to guide? Can those who are begging

for their daily bread, ever give anything? Let us not deceive ourselves. Let us not lie to ourselves.

Let us understand our condition and think.

I am addressing this to the new generation, to the young children, to the youth and the students. Do

not just believe in the talks of your parents and teachers, but think for yourself. If you think they are

right, you may agree; otherwise, fight. Do not just believe.

In the Sorbonne University in France, the students have written a few words on the front of a building.

Efforts have been made to remove that writing. The students however have refused to remove that

unique writing. It is written there: ”Professors, you have become old.” The writing is very prominent

and many efforts were made to remove it. The professors quarreled with the students, but the

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students said, ”Every professor should pass by and read that he has become old, and he should

kindly bear in mind that he should not make any attempt to make the students old.”

Therefore, think a little....

I am grateful to you for having heard me peacefully, with so much love. Finally, I bow down to the

God residing within all of you. Accept my greetings.

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CHAPTER 9

Transformation Through Awareness

2 September 1969 pm

The original title was: Education: Means and Ends

Question 1

DO YOU THINK IT IS NECESSARY TO GIVE A NEW TYPE OF EDUCATION SO THAT

PEOPLE MAY UNDERSTAND DIFFERENTIATIONS? CAN OBJECTIVITY AND SUBJECTIVITY

BE SEPARATED? DO YOU THINK IT IS POSSIBLE TO GIVE SUCH RIGHT EDUCATION?

Yes, it is necessary to have such a civilization which does not teach distinctions from the very

childhood and which may lead to the understanding of oneness. The reality is that from the beginning

there are no distinctions in the mind of a child. Distinctions are taught by us. It is true to such an

extent that a child is not able to distinguish between a dream and reality.

A child weeps in the morning after seeing a dream at night. He is weeping for a toy which he saw in a

dream; he is asking for that toy. The child is not able to distinguish between what he sees in a dream

and what he sees when he is awake. His seeing is without any distinction. A person addresses his

father as ”father,” but a child who hears this will also address that person as ”father.” For the child

it is difficult to understand that that person was not his father. He does not know whether he is a

Hindu or a Mohammedan; he does not know anything. He is still in the world of oneness, but that

oneness is full of ignorance.

A saint ultimately enters into the same world of oneness, but then his oneness is full of knowing.

Whosoever is ignorant can be divided; we cannot divide the oneness of the saint, because his

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oneness is born out of his knowing. Children are born out of oneness, but they are taught

distinctions; it is necessary to teach them some distinctions; it is useful for living. It is necessary to

teach what is poison and what is nectar, it is necessary to know where there is a door and where

there is a wall. It is also necessary to teach where is harm and where there is safety – these

distinctions have to be taught.

But it is necessary to see that behind all this teaching of distinctions there should develop

continuously a sense of oneness in his mind – meaning he should remain aware of the fact that

sometimes poison acts like nectar and sometimes what is taken to be nectar acts like poison. He

should be able to understand that there are times when a man recovers when poison is administered

and there are times when nectar taken in excess may kill the person. When a child grows up some

distinctions will have to be taught, but the child’s awareness should also develop to understand that

all the distinctions are just functional, that the distinctions are made looking to the limitations of man.

Within him a current of oneness should continuously flow. He should be aware of the fact that all

things are united from within.

The impact of our life on the child should be such that he visualizes life in its oneness. He should

not feel that inner and outer, subjective and objective are two things – he should feel life as a whole.

He should understand that he is the same person when he is eating and when he is praying; that

his prayer is connected in some deep way with his eating, it cannot be separate. The child should

become aware of this inner principle, and it is not difficult for a child, who in reality feels that he is

the same person, to become aware who eats and who prays. But he becomes confused when he

sees that his father becomes a different person when he eats, a different person when he is sitting

in his shop, and a third person when he is praying. When he comes home he becomes a different

person, and when he is facing a servant he becomes yet another person. The child is not able to

understand this.

A child is being told that he should respect his father because he is old. The child then wants to

respect the old servant also, because if old age is a matter for respect, then the old servant should

also get respect. Such behavior on the child’s part is beyond our understanding. We then tell the

child to respect his old father, not the old servant. Then we are creating a distinction.

But this distinction is not just limited to one between a father and a servant; it creates two faces

within him: one to be shown to the father and the other to be shown to the servant. The child learns

that he has to stand in a temple one way and sit in the shop in a different way. One has to be clever

in the shop and simple in the temple. This way we are teaching him divisions. Slowly all these

distinctive impressions, layer after layer, will get built in and the child will take these distinctions as

conclusive in his life.

Actually the system of education should be such that from the very childhood, right from the parents

and school to the university, he remains aware of the fact that every thing is connected; he should

remain aware that something is connecting even two opposites from within. One thing should be

very clear in his mind: that he is undivided and whole; that there can be no two things like inner and

outer; that ”whosoever I am from outside, I am the same from within.” Then only will there be born

in him an integrated individual, an individuality which is not divisible.

Our society has a system that builds up personality but does not create any individuality. Society

creates a personality, but does not make an individual. Personality does not mean one whole

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individual but an individual divided into many parts – he has many masks from outside, a separate

mask meant for each different individual. He can change the mask according to the need. There

is not one individual within him who remains the same in all states, conditions and situations, the

same inside and outside, the same in a temple and in a shop.

We are doing the same thing always: we consider aims, goals and ends as of primary importance.

This has put man into many difficulties. The first thing that is to be understood is that the goal is

somewhere in the future and we are in the present. Wherever we are we will be in the present and

our goals will always be in the future. The goal can never be in the present, we can never be in the

future; whenever we are, we are in the present, we can never be in the future. Therefore we are

creating such a tension in our mind which cannot be resolved. We are creating such a mad anxiety

in a person which cannot be removed. His goal is always in the future and he is in the today. There

can be no meeting between today and tomorrow, because when tomorrow comes it will become

today and the goal will shift to the tomorrow. In such a situation the person will live unchanged

throughout his life and his idea of the goal will continue to torture him and harass him.

If a man is violent he will remain violent, but the goal will be nonviolence. He will say that sometime

he will become nonviolent: if not in this life, in the next he will become nonviolent. But he will

continue to remain violent because he has to live today and nonviolence can happen tomorrow;

thus the nonviolence that is going to happen tomorrow will remain to be achieved tomorrow. He will

go on postponing.

Thus there is one beauty in a goal: that whatsoever is important in the life of man, he will look for

a trick to postpone it. He will say, ”It is not possible to be nonviolent today; I am violent now Slowly

therefore I shall endeavor, meditate, pray, do yoga, take sannyas. If not in this life, in the next life, or

in still another life – sometime I will become nonviolent. It is not a small thing, that it can happen just

today!”

A convenient excuse therefore is found to postpone till tomorrow. Now that the goal has been

postponed till tomorrow, I shall remain the same as I am today. What can I do? It is not my fault,

the goal is not achievable today. Therefore I shall remain as violent as I am. This means that a man

who is violent will remain violent; nonviolence will be the goal and he will engrave in his temple the

words: ”Nonviolence is the supreme religion. This is the only religion which is to be achieved.”

Our old Tirthankaras have achieved this in the past; we have now to achieve the same. It is written in

the story about Mahavira, that he achieved nonviolence by toiling for it birth after birth for many births.

Therefore that nonviolence is the future goal – ”but now I am violent.” What I want to emphasize is

that this goal-oriented outlook allows you to postpone things, and that is very dangerous.

Another thing that happens as a result of a goal-oriented outlook is that it creates suppression in

the mind of a person and creates a sort of torture due to one’s remaining violent. He wants to be

nonviolent – what can he do? Should he suppress violence, should he pretend being nonviolent –

what can be the way out? Since I am violent, even after my pretending nonviolence, my violence

is going to continue. It is therefore very interesting to note that in becoming nonviolent I shall use

violence. If I have to be nonviolent I will run away from my wife; it does not matter if due to my

action my wife dies of starvation and the children begin to beg in the streets – in the process I am

becoming nonviolent. The irony of the situation is that this violent behavior of mine is only with the

goal of becoming nonviolent, and therefore it matters little....

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There was one famous Jaina sadhu. After leaving his wife in his town, he stayed for twenty years

in Varanasi. He received news about his wife’s death through a telegram. On reading the telegram

he exclaimed, ”Good, the botheration is over!” In his biography it is written that he was such a great

ascetic that even on the death of his wife he did not express any unhappiness He only said, ”Good,

the botheration is over!”

Somebody had come to give me his biography. I told that man, ”It is a matter of great astonishment to

me that when he had given up his wife twenty years ago, where was the question of any botheration?

There must have been no botheration whatsoever: he had left her twenty years before. What

botheration can be there from a wife that was abandoned? On her death, if that ascetic thought

that his wife was a botheration, that must be due to his awaiting her death all these twenty years.

This man is violent, which means he could even have killed her. In fact, it was an attempt to kill

her when he ran away leaving her dying – and now after twenty years he talks about ”botheration.”

That man was of a very violent nature, because even at her moment of death he had no feeling of

compassion, pain, or sensation of unhappiness. What he said was full of violence, and during these

twenty years he had been practising nothing but violence.

What else can a poor violent person do in trying to be nonviolent? He can only make use of violence.

He will be violent towards others and towards himself also. It becomes problematic when we become

violent to others: we know and others also know that we are violent, but when we become violent

to ourselves we do not understand that we are violent. If a man goes on a long fast we do not think

he is doing any violence. But when I catch hold of a person, lock him up in a room, do not give him

any food, and keep him starving for a number of days, the whole town will come to know that I am

a very violent person, starving a locked-up man for such a long time. But if I lock myself in a room

and do not take any food for twenty days I will be considered a great ascetic person. In both the

situations I am doing the same thing. The only difference is that in one case I am being violent to

another person and in the other case I am being violent to myself. The illusion arises because the

doer in one case, and the person on whom something is done in the other case, are not two different

persons.

Another thing I would like to tell you is that whatsoever a violent person may do to become nonviolent,

can only be violent. He cannot become nonviolent that way. Therefore I say that the question is not

of nonviolence being a supreme religion, but of who you are and what you are doing. Let this be

understood properly. If I am doing violence, let it go deep within me that I am violent, and let that

violent nature of mine become clearer and go deeper in my awareness, and let me realise that I am

violent from morning till evening; let me realise that when I am walking on the road there is violence

in my walk also. Violence is not such that it happens only when one puts a knife into somebody’s

chest.

It is thought by people of very poor intelligence that only when you put a knife into another person’s

chest does it become violence. The violence of staring at a person in a particular way can become

more violent than putting a knife in his chest. Violence can happen even if you do not look at

somebody at all. It is not only a question of seeing violently: if you are passing on a road and if I

pass by without looking at you, as if you are just a small fry, as if you are a nonentity.... Big leaders

walk that way on the road. They are walking as if people walking around them are just worms.

Question 2

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DO YOU THINK THAT OUR NEW EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS WILL EVER

BE ABLE TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM?

First, try to understand what I am telling you. It is more valuable that you become fully aware of the

fact that you are violent. It is not a question of achieving nonviolence: one has to realise what one is

now, today, this moment. If I can rightly see that I am violent for all the twenty-four hours.... It is not

that you become sometimes violent and sometimes nonviolent; there is a continuity in your being.

Whatsoever you are, you remain the same for almost twenty-four hours – sometimes appearing a

little less violent, sometimes appearing a little more violent; sometimes manifestly violent, sometimes

violent in disguise. Nevertheless you do remain what you are. A violent person will remain violent

in all his doing. Even when he is praying, if you can look within his heart, he will be found to be

violent. Even when he is giving charity, if you can look within his mind, he will be doing violence.

While giving charity somebody’s poverty is not a matter of importance for him, but when he is giving

charity it is he who is giving, who is important, not the one who is receiving it. While giving charity

also his ego is getting nourished. Whatsoever that violent person does will be violent.

Therefore what I want to tell you is that it is not necessary to make nonviolence a goal. It was an old

trick, but it has failed. It has caused great harm. What is necessary is to know what I am, know it

and recognize it. What am I today? What am I now? If my recognition of this becomes quite clear,

I do not have to do anything else. The more clearly I see that violence is existing every moment in

me, the deeper will be my understanding.

The moment I see violence as violence, violence will become impossible. Violence will disappear.

My sitting, standing, eating, drinking, walking, speaking, meeting – everything, all my gestures will

change. I will not have to change it; I will not change anything, keeping nonviolence as a goal before

me. I should just recognize that violence exists in me, and the transformation will happen. It is

understanding that changes. Just as the changes happen, I will know that violence is disappearing.

When violence disappears, what remains is nonviolence. It means that nonviolence is not a goal

which is to be reached tomorrow. If today violence disappears from my mind, then today nonviolence

is achieved – this very moment.

Nonviolence is neither to be brought from anywhere, nor to be reached. Nonviolence is not a

matter of any gap in time, that I will reach within ten years or after trying for ten births; it is not a

goal. If my violence disappears today I am nonviolent today. How can this violence disappear? It

cannot disappear through any violent means. If one thinks that by going on a fast he can become

nonviolent.... Fasting itself is a violent means, a torture, suicidal. By fasting, neither violence can

disappear, nor can nonviolence happen. A person may say, ”I shall stand on my head or remain lying

on a bed of thorns” – all these are violent means. Through them one cannot become nonviolent.

Then the question arises: What can be the means for achieving nonviolence?

The first thing: Understanding is the first means. There is no other nonviolent method in this world

as good as understanding – because for one whose understanding increases, violence becomes

impossible. Understanding is so nonviolent that violence is impossible. Once you are able to see that

this is violence, it disappears. The moment of your seeing becomes the moment of its disappearing.

Nothing more has to be done.

Now the question you have raised about the present education system – whether it will be able to

do something.

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The present education system cannot do anything, because the whole system of education today

is devised keeping goals in mind. We are teaching goals to children. We are teaching children not

to steal – non-stealing is the goal. That goal is somewhere in the future: today the children steal.

Today the teacher is stealing, the father is stealing, the mother is also stealing, the town is stealing,

the whole world is stealing. And everybody is teaching non-stealing, to give up stealing. The child

also takes a vow to give up stealing, but the moment this vow is being taken, at that very moment the

stealing is accepted; stealing will continue – because the child says, he will give up stealing. What

is promised for tomorrow becomes a lie; nothing is to be done today. Today stealing is to be done,

has to be done – but it will have to be given up, that is the goal of man. Talking about the goals in

the life of man is a highly dishonest thing.

Now we need a new system of education wherein a child is not just told not to tell any lies, but he

should be told to just remain aware when he is telling a lie. There is no necessity to be afraid or to

run away, but only to know that you are telling a lie. The fact that the child has become aware, due

to your assistance, of the act of lying, is enough. We do not have to tell them anything more. We

do not have to tell them not to tell a lie or to give up lying; that question does not arise. A child’s

sensitivity should increase so much that it knows instantly that it has told a lie. It should not happen

that the child tells a lie but does not know that it has told a lie. But such things are happening in our

life! Man is not able to understand things.

You meet a man passing on the road and you just ask him, ”How are you?”... and then you inquire if

he had seen a particular person. He says he saw him only yesterday. That particular man was not

there in the town at all. That man who had replied had nothing to do with the person about whom

the inquiry was made. He was not aware that he was telling a lie. He had no interest in telling a

lie. But he was perhaps not aware about what he was speaking or why he was speaking. But there

must be some reason why he was speaking. Neither was he aware of those reasons nor had he any

idea of them.

I had a professor. Whenever I talked about any book, he would immediately say, ”Oh! It is very good,

I have read about that book!” After a few days I began to doubt, because if he had read that book

he never mentioned it in the class. It seemed there was not a single book which he had not read.

One day when I met him, I gave him a false name of a nonexistent writer. I told him there was a

Russian philosopher named Bornokov.... He said, ”Oh yes! His book is very good. I have read his

book – but I have read it about twenty years ago!”

I then immediately told him that there was no such author born twenty years ago or even twenty

crores of years ago. When there was no such author, there could be no question of his writing a

book. ”I asked the question only because I felt that you had not read a certain book, but you were

simply saying that you had read it. It was painful for you to accept that there could be any book

which you might not have read!”

Such is the ego, creating problems. But he was not aware. He was so much accustomed to speak

that way that it would be wrong to say that he was knowingly telling a lie. This had become his

nature, a part of his blood – lies come out of it.

Therefore there is no question of teaching someone not to tell lies. The question is of awakening him

so that whenever he tells a lie he would know that he has told a lie. I believe that it is slowly becoming

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impossible to tell lies knowingly – because slowly one realises the absurdity, the foolishness, the

ignorance and the folly of telling lies and slowly one sees the harm that is caused. One also realises

that one lie leads to another and another. We get so much entangled that it becomes difficult to get

out.

Another interesting fact is that in telling lies we are not only harming others, but we are harming

ourselves much more, because slowly we become incapable of knowing the truth itself. From a

humane angle, I feel, such a person becomes so much weakened that we cannot imagine. A person

who tells lies does not believe that any one can ever speak the truth. He is not able to trust anyone,

he cannot make anyone his friend. He cannot ever take any matter in its natural way. His potential

of being a man will remain weak. If we can understand where this habit of telling lies may lead us

to, and what is happening within us or what fruits we may reap or what we are doing to others, then

we will not tell lies anytime.

Another interesting thing is that though we are teaching others not to tell lies, we never teach why

anyone ever tells a lie. On the one hand the educationist teaches not to tell lies, but on the other hand

he also goes on teaching those very things due to which one is tempted to tell a lie. For example,

the fundamental reason for telling a lie is fear. If we desire that there should be no falsehoods we

must destroy the fear. But the teacher has a cane in his hands and threatens that if any one tells a

lie he will break his head. Now this teacher also does not know what he is doing. On the one hand

he is instilling fear in the mind of the child, and on the other hand he says that if the child tells a lie

he will break his head. That fear will compel the child to tell a lie. If the child was playing some game

with other children and came late to the school, the child would say he had gone to bring medicine

for his father. He is telling this because of the fear of the cane. The teacher teaches that if the child

tells a lie he will be punished. The teacher does not understand that while telling a lie is wrong,

threatening with the cane is also wrong.

If the teacher wants that his students should not tell lies, then fear must be removed from the field

of education. Let the children become fearless. Make them so full of courage that they will be ready

to face any calamity laughingly, but will not tolerate the embarrassment of telling a lie.

I have read one novel. It is a wonderful story. There is one character in it who kills an absolute

stranger with a knife all of a sudden. Two people were taking a sunbath on the beach, when suddenly

one got up and thrust a knife in the other’s back. He had not even seen the face of that stranger,

because the stranger was lying on his belly. When he was brought before the court he explained

that he was feeling that in his whole life he had done nothing; his whole life so far had passed

off uselessly, without any events. His name never appeared in the newspapers. So while he was

taking a sunbath he felt that if he thrusts a knife in that back shining under the sun, his name will

be printed in the newspapers and there would be a lot of talk about him. He said, ”I have therefore

done something. I am also feeling the thrill. I have stabbed him for the thrill of it, there is no other

reason.”

Nobody believed the story. The court also could not believe it, because nobody in this world

had done anything like it before. The court therefore threatened that he would be given capital

punishment.

That man replied, ”The story is only this, there is nothing more; the court may do what it thinks fit.”

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Now for this some witnesses had to be found, because as it was nobody was prepared to believe in

the story of killing somebody without any reason.

One witness reported that when his mother had died he was found in a theater the same night. In

the morning his mother died and the same night he was seeing a show in a theater. The court asked

him if he was seeing a show in a theater the same night his mother had died, and he replied, ”Yes,

I was seeing the show, because I thought that my mother had already died, and now whenever I

would go to a theater it would be only after my mother’s death; there was no other alternative. Now,

how can I go to a theater before her death? I can now only go after her death. My going to a theater

is going to happen only after this event of her death. Whether it happens after one day or two days

or three days, what difference will it make? If people can go to a theater only before their mother’s

death, all theaters will have to be closed down. Whose mother does not die? Everybody’s mother

dies someday.”

The court felt that the person was very dangerous: he can see a show in a theater on the very

night of the day his mother died! He had explained that he had taken the ticket earlier, prior to her

death. Even then the court felt that, ”How can it be possible to see a show on that night?” That man

continued to argue that hereafter, whenever he would see a show, it would be only after her death.

That man did not deny seeing the show.

Another person had asked him, ”You must have been very sad when your mother died?” That man

gave evidence in the court; he replied, ”Yes, I was very sad. The previous night I had to sit near her

death bed and I was not able to sleep the whole night.”

The court was also told that that man was very dangerous because he was telling the truth. He had

also said, ”At first I was very unhappy, at her death, but afterwards I became more unhappy, because

I had not been able to sleep the whole night. My mother had already died. Whatever sadness I had

to experience, I did experience. Now why should I spoil another night?”

For the court, this was not at all believable. The magistrate in the court expected that at least he

should not have spoken all that he did so truthfully. He was talking like an idiot. He was telling so

much truth that nobody in this world would believe it – because the whole world is just existing on

falsehood.

Tears came into the eyes of the magistrate. He said, ”I have not seen a person like this before. He

goes on telling that at first he was sad due to his mother’s death, but a few hours later he felt that

he need not spoil the night after her death. Now, what he was telling was the truth. What can I do in

this matter?”

Actually, on the one hand we are teaching not to tell lies and on the other hand we are instilling fear

in man about the consequences of telling lies. If we want to lead a man towards truth and if we

desire to show him how joyful it is to tell the truth, we will have to create new values. We will have to

teach fearlessness and we will have to accept the truth straight, as it is. Truth is very cruel; though

the world asks everybody to speak the truth, the world is not ready for truth, because truth is very

cruel, harsh and merciless.

When some person comes to your house, at first you feel a little upset, but you welcome him saying,

”It is very fortunate for us that you came.” That man also knows that there was nothing to feel

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fortunate about in his coming. When you go to his house he also welcomes you the same way,

knowing full well the embarrassment he is experiencing.

We have created a false world around us. In this world, speaking truth is our goal and the whole

structure is built on falsehood. We will not accept the truth. Can a man tell his wife while walking on

a road, ”That woman passing by is very beautiful and I like her very much”? Actually, while walking

on the road, a woman can and will look beautiful – but can he say this to his wife? ... And our whole

social structure is advising us to speak the truth.

It will be a beautiful world in which we are able to make our children accept the truth. We should

be able to convince our daughters that it is not necessary that only she should be liked; when she

becomes a wife it is possible that the husband may like someone else. It would be a wonderful day,

and a very loving one at that, when the husband would be able to say that some other woman is

looking very beautiful.... And if the wife would be able to hear this and remain compassionate in this

situation, then only she is a wife; then only there is love between them. Tomorrow the wife can also

say....

One such event happened. Four years ago a woman came to me in Bombay. She told me that she

was in great difficulty. The difficulty was that her husband loved her very much, there was no end

to his love, but she was not able to love him at all. Her love was still with the man she loved before

her marriage – it was so even today. That man was staying in Africa. She was not able to meet him

after the marriage because he came to Bombay for three or four days only every four to six years.

She said, ”My husband loves me so much that it is becoming burdensome to me. It would be better

if my husband does not love me. I am not able to love him, because that man’s face is still very much

in my mind till now. Now I do not have anything to do with that man; there is no point, no question

about him. Now I am very much sorry for my husband, but what can I do?” And she started weeping

bitterly.

I told her to tell the whole thing to her husband. That way she would become very light. She replied,

”What will my husband think? He has loved me so much, and now twenty years have passed since

our marriage. It is not any recent event – but my mind is still the same, involved with that man!”

I again tried to explain to her and convinced her that it would be a matter of great love for her to do

so. I had also told her that I knew her husband well and that he was coming to me. She was very

much afraid. At last she agreed to tell the whole story... and she told him.

After that she met me when I had gone to Bombay again. She said, ”Something very astonishing

happened. I never expected it. After my telling him the whole story, from that very day his love

towards me became wonderful and immense. We were never so close before and I became very

light after telling him. Afterwards, when that man came from Africa, my husband called him and

made him stay in our house. He was there with us for seven days and during those seven days my

husband tried to leave us alone together as much as possible, to sit, to talk and to meet. However,

within these seven days that man went right out of my mind, and what had not happened during

these twenty years happened within seven days due to my husband’s wholehearted effort to let us

live near each other.

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”My husband began to remain away from the house as much as possible. As a result, that man’s

image left my mind, because all that I had imagined about that man.... He was a very ordinary man...

and I saw in my husband what I never could before, because I never tried – his great love that had

remained steadfast all along. That love is now clear to me.”

If we cannot teach the real meaning of telling the truth.... And I am sure the phenomenon that

happened in her life could never have happened if she had not told the truth. It could not have

happened while that layer of falsehood remained intact. That man left her mind for ever, that matter

was finished, and what is more – the most important and most significant thing that happened – that

wonderful husband came very close to her. That man gone, things became so clear that a wall that

had existed between her and her husband was destroyed. There was no feeling of guilt, no wound,

no secrets in between them. Everything became light. Only when we hide things do they become a

burden.

Therefore I feel that our whole system is based on falsehood in that we do not give any room to truth,

but we have made truth our goal. All our arrangements are like that. All arrangements are based on

violence, but the goal is of nonviolence. The whole arrangement is dishonest, but we go on talking

about honesty. Ultimately what has happened is that the greater the dishonesty there is in the mind,

the greater is the illusion of honesty.

Those words ”honesty is religion” written on our doors can enable perpetration of a bigger

dishonesty. It means that honesty will be used for committing dishonesty. But we are not aware

of this. This has happened due to our setting the goals to be achieved in the future.

I would like a system of education in which the goal is day-to-day living. There is nothing like future:

whatsoever I am living today is all and everything. We should create such an atmosphere in the

educational institutions which will help us to understand, to recognize and to know, that howsoever

harsh the truth may be, we should respect only those who speak the truth. However indifferent

and cruel the truth may appear, the truth only must be respected. From the very first day of our

education, all the efforts should be directed towards increasing our recognition and knowledge of

what truth is. We should know how to expose the falsehood and should know why we should expose

the falsehood. Our endeavour should be to increase the respect and dignity of truth. Geography,

mathematics, chemistry and physics are not as important as the meditative awareness.

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